

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

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Summary: Found in the middle of a field, with no memories to call his own, Drake quickly leaves an impression on Prince Chrom, and joins the Shepherds as their new Tactician. But, strange stirrings have popped up all over Ylisse. Are they connected to Drake's lost memories? Or is it an entirely different, yet still heinous, plot? Join the Shepherds and find out during the Fell Dragon War!

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1**

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Note: Hello, everyone! This is The Servant of Grima, here with a new story, based on Fire Emblem: Awakening. Not only will this be my first story on , this will be my first time delving into writing a Fire Emblem Fanfiction. I am currently writing a League of Legends Fanfiction and the first in a Pokémon Fanfiction series, so I have a lot on my plate. This story would not have been possible without inspiration from Amy47101's FE Fanfiction, "Fire Emblem Awakening: Unbreakable Ties" and metallover's FE Fanfiction, "Fire Emblem Awakening: Invisible Ties". The story will, for the most part, follow the plotline of Awakening, with a few differentiations thrown in here and there. So, without further ado, here's the prologue!

Prologue

The shining blade pierced through the dark barrier that sealed the door to the throne room, shattering it instantly. The blade's wielder, a young man no older than twenty-four, rammed his left shoulder into the door, throwing them open with such force that they left two craters in the walls they were connected to. He ran into the room, his blue eyes fixed on the figure poised in the center of the room. He was an imposing man, a powerful Sorcerer whose red eyes shined with darkness and bloodlust. He turned to the blue-eyed swordsman, and sneered.

"Fool!" he said, his hands crackling with dark magic, "Do you really think you can defeat me? No matter how much you struggle, you cannot change what is already written!" The Sorcerer sent out bolts of dark lightning from his hands, which the swordsman quickly dodged.

"Let me tell you something, Validar," the man said, his blade shining ever brighter, "I make my own future. And it's not one you'll live to see!" He swiftly dashed at Validar, but the Sorcerer flew into the air, dodging the strike. From his hands came three black rings which circled around Validar for a few moments before exploding outward, striking the swordsman head on.

He felt the darkness' paralytic attributes kicking in moments later, and fell down to one knee, his sword clattering to the ground beside him. Validar laughed mockingly, and floated down, surrounding his left hand in a shroud of shadow.

"And so ends the great Prince Chrom of Ylisse. I'll make sure to send your final words to your wife and daughter, even though they'll be on their way to meet you soon enough." Suddenly, a blast of lightning came from the hallway and struck Validar straight in the chest, causing him to stumble backwards and lose his concentration. The paralysis raking Chrom's body slowly faded, and, grabbing his sword, he turned to the doorway to look at his savior.

A hooded figure, somewhere around twenty-one years of age, ran into the throne room, a yellow Tome in his left hand. Small bolts of lightning danced across his right arm, and a Silver Sword hung from a sheath at his hip. "Chrom," he said, grabbing a vulnerary from his belt, "I told you not to run off like that! You could've been killed!" Taking the healing bottle from his Tactician, the prince swallowed a small amount of the crystal clear liquid before placing the cork back in.

"Well, I didn't die, now did I?" he said, a small smirk on his face. By this time, Validar had regained his composure, and glared at the Ylissian duo before floating into the air, darkness swirling around him.

"Well, it looks like the Prince's little lapdog has saved his master once again," he sneered with slight irritation. Drawing a dark violet Tome from his robes, he used the darkness around him to open it and hold it afloat. "But it doesn't matter, as your fates have already been forged! You cannot change destiny!"

Chrom and the Tactician glared at Validar, and prepared themselves for battle. "This is it, Drake, our final battle!" Chrom exclaimed, brandishing his sword. Drake quickly glanced at Chrom, confused as to how Chrom could still trust him, even though he knew fully well what he was. "You're too easy to read sometimes, you know?" the Prince said, catching the Tactician off guard. "You're one of us Drake, a Shepherd. No matter what, no 'destiny' will ever change the bonds that we have forged. Now, let's kill this bastard and be done with it!"

Drake nodded, and cast another lightning spell to deflect a dark energy sphere headed straight for Chrom. Chrom then ran at the floating Validar, and leapt into the air, slashing down with all his might. The Sorcerer flew out of the way, avoiding the strike, only to be struck in the back by another bolt of lightning. Validar fell to the ground, his Tome falling out of his reach. Drake stashed his Tome, and drew his sword. Running at Validar, he thrust the blade at him, only for the Sorcerer to catch the blade in his shadow-coated hands.

"Drake," he hissed, his voice betraying no emotion, "Why do you insist on continuing to play these games? You're only delaying the inevitable. And besides, have you considered the alternative? What should happen if I fall? Those followers

of Naga will spurn you for the rest of their lives, now that they know what you are." Flinging the sword back, Validar quickly drew a short blade that looked more like an ornamental dagger than an actual weapon. Drake slashed at the insane man, only to find himself in a blade-lock with Validar. They slid their blades closer to their bodies, each trying to overpower the other.

"And if you kill me, you'll incur the wrath of the Grimleal...Would you really choose to be so utterly alone?" Chrom ran at Validar, causing him to break the blade-lock and leap back, away from the deadly blades. "Humans are weak, pathetic creatures...Your 'bonds' with them will bind you. You're destined for a greater purpose...The greatest purpose! You are to become a God!" He laughed maniacally, and was caught off guard when Drake ran at him. He tried to dodge the sword, but it was too late. Drake's blade found its mark, and, with one final attack from Chrom, delivered the killing blow.

Drake leaned closer to the dying body of Validar and whispered into his ear. "...Not your god," he said, so low that only the two of them heard it, "Not today, and not ever." Validar fell to the ground, the darkness within him pouring out like blood from a normal human. Chrom and Drake looked at the body for a moment, before the Prince turned to congratulate Drake. A dark, echoing voice broke through the silence of the room, and it came from Validar. "This isn't over," it screamed, before Validar conjured a dark sphere between his hands. "Damn you both!" He fired the ball at Chrom, who had no time to dodge, and it nearly hit its target. However, Drake shoved Chrom aside at the last second, and took the blast for the Prince.

Drake's vision went blank for a moment, and then he fell, hitting his head on the ground. "Drake!" Chrom cried out. He quickly sheathed his sword, and ran to Drake, sitting him up straight. He uncorked the vulnerary, and gave the rest of the liquid to Drake. "You all right?" Drake's eyes regained their composure, and he slid a hand up to his temple. He pulled it back to see it slightly covered in blood.

"I...I'm fine, Chrom," he said, slowly shaking his head. "It's nothing that Lissa or Maribelle can't fix." Chrom stared at Drake for a moment, skeptical, before helping him up. The two turned to Validar's body, which was being consumed by a violet flame, before it disappeared entirely. "It's finally over, Chrom."

"Yeah," the Prince replied. "Thanks to you, we carried the day." Drake's eyes slightly widened, as it seemed like he could barely hear Chrom's words, like someone had placed wax in his ears. "We can rest easy now. At long last..." Chrom continued, unaware of Drake's shock. Suddenly, the Tactician's outer vision started to crackle with a bright red sheen. Drake clutched his head, which was starting to convulse in pain, and moaned slightly.

Chrom heard the small noise, and turned to Drake, a look of worry flashing in his eyes. "Hey, are you sure you're fine, Drake?" he asked. "Hey...Hey! Hang on, I'll-!" His words were cut off as a blade of lightning pierced through his torso. Drake's vision returned to normal, and he saw the man who had saved his life two years ago mortally wounded in front of him. Drake looked around, trying to find out who could've gotten so close to Chrom without either of them noticing, but he suddenly felt a sickening feeling rising in his throat, and looked at his hand. Sparks danced across his palm, and he knew instantly that he had betrayed his friend.

"Chrom!" he cried, staring at the Prince, tears forming in his eyes. "I...I don't know what happened, I...I swear! Please forgive-!" Chrom placed a shaky hand on Drake's shoulder, causing the Tactician to cease his panicked apology.

"This is not your...Your fault," he said weakly, his eyes reflecting forgiveness in them. "Drake...Promise me...You'll escape from this place. Please...Go..." With his last words spoken, Chrom collapsed to the ground, and breathed his last.

"No...Chrom, no!" Drake cried hysterically, shaking his friend in the hopes that he was only unconscious. "You can't go! You can't leave us! What about Lissa, or...or your family? They need you...The Shepherds need you..." Drake started to choke on his words, his tears splashing down onto Chrom's face and the tiled floor. "Please...Don't go..." Laughter echoed throughout Drake's head, and he tilted his head back, releasing a wail of despair and rage.

"CHROM!"

It seems that we're given a glimpse into the future (or is it the past?), and it already depicts the death of a main character by a trusted friend. Exciting stuff, ain't it? See you guys in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Note: Welcome back, loyal readers! This is The Servant of Grima, back with more of Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War (which will be referred to as The Fell Dragon Chronicles from now on). Before we begin this chapter, I want to make a few things clear. First, the main story of Fire Emblem: Awakening will not be drastically changed from what it was in the game: only a few things will change, as well as some additions of my own creation. Second, some of the pairings in the story will go against what some players may consider 'canon', or may not even be possible in-game. Before anyone flames me for such digression, I wish to tell you that I am not trying to offend anyone with my pairing choices. So, please, respect my opinions. Finally, I wish to clarify on different font types that will be presented in the story, so here's the full list:

Bold=Taguel and manakete speech when in their transformed states, author's notes.

Italics=Describing dreams or visions, thoughts.

Bold+Italics=Risen speech.

Bold+Underlined=Chapter titles.

Normal Text=No special meaning.

"Italics"=Telepathic speech, speech during visions or dreams.

ALL CAPS (IN ANY FONT)=Grima's speech in either Dragon-God or Human Form.

Well, with all that said and done, here's chapter one!

Chapter One

The crystal clear waters of the river shone beautifully in the midday sunlight, the scales of the fish within reflecting the light in hundreds of ways. Prince Chrom of Ylisse cast his gaze into the mesmerizing waters, and sighed. It wasn't every day that he could get away from his duties and be at peace like this, away from the hustle and bustle of life as the Exalt's younger brother. He stood up, and, taking his sword, Falchion, out of its sheath, he began to spar with the air.

"Be careful, milord," a voice warned him from behind. "It wouldn't be good if you fell in and ruined your clothes." Chrom sighed, and turned around, staring at the man behind him. The man looked to be about twenty-two years old, with short, chocolate brown hair and black-green eyes. He mostly wore armor that was cobalt blue in color with some white, but he had a dark blue dress shirt underneath the chestplate. He looked at Chrom with a wary, yet focused, gaze, his face showing no signs of emotion whatsoever.

"Honestly, Frederick," Chrom sighed, unconsciously rubbing his temple, "Must you be so serious about everything?" The Great Knight nodded, and rubbed the head of his mount.

"I must, milord," he said stately, "If I can't keep you safe, then who could?" Just then, a young girl, no older than seventeen, walked up from behind Frederick, and giggled.

"Oh, leave my brother alone, Frederick," she said, her blond hair, which was tied in two pigtails, shifting slightly with her voice. "The river's only ankle deep or something. The worst that can happen would be a bruised ego." Chrom smiled at his younger sister, and chuckled.

"Considering if I even did fall in," he said, causing his sister to giggle again.

"But, milord-!" Frederick started to say, before he was interrupted by the girl whacking him with her staff. Rubbing his head, he glared at the girl, before quickly looking away from her piercing silver blue eyes. "Sorry, milady," he mumbled. It was at this moment that Frederick saw something strange with the river. "Milord, behind you." Chrom turned to the river, and saw the water turn red. The girl noticed, and walked up to her brother.

"Is that...blood?" she asked, the bubblyness in her voice replaced by a small hint of fear. "Could it be human?" Chrom turned his head so that he was looking upriver, and he narrowed his eyes.

"I don't know, Lissa," he said, "But we should make sure that there aren't any bandits hassling anymore innocent farmers." With nary another word, Chrom sheathed Falchion, and ran upriver, Frederick and Lissa following close behind.

Minutes later, Lissa and Chrom spotted the source of the blood across the river: a dark violet cloak hanging from a low tree branch, covered in the red substance. Crossing the river using a fallen log as a bridge, the siblings reached the tree, where Lissa took the cloak and started washing it in the river.

"Well, this explains where the blood came from," she said as the red coloring slowly disappeared from the cloak, "But who does it belong to?" Chrom shook his head, having about as much of a clue as his sister. Frederick finished crossing the river on his horse, and rejoined with his charges.

"Milord," he said, catching Chrom's attention, "There appears to be a trail on the grass. Perhaps we should follow it?" Chrom looked towards the fields, and saw the blood on the blades of grass. It was faint, but unmistakable nonetheless. Chrom nodded, and followed the trail, leaving Frederick behind to watch over Lissa.

After reaching a large, open field, Chrom quickly glanced around. *This was where the trail led*, he thought. *So where...?* Giving up, he turned back, only for his eyes to catch a glint of metal off in the distance. "Lissa, Frederick, I found something!" he called out, racing to the glint's source. Reaching it, he found a yellow Tome, the kind a Mage would use, and not three paces away, its owner: a young man, about eighteen years old, with blonde hair that was highlighted black at the front, unconscious with a nasty-looking wound across his chest.

"Oh my Gods!" Lissa cried, she and Frederick having reached Chrom's location just seconds ago. Grabbing her staff from Frederick, she knelt down beside the unconscious man, and waved the staff above the man's wound. Blue light started to emit from the gem at the top of the staff, and it enveloped the wound, slowly healing it, leaving nothing but a barely visible scar. "What happened to him?!"

"Most likely bandits, milady," Frederick said bluntly, without any sympathy in his voice. Chrom shook his head, and grabbed a small pouch from the man's belt. It jingled with the sound of coins as it was lifted.

"I doubt it, Frederick. If it was bandits, they would've taken this," the prince replied, tying the pouch back onto the man's belt. "Besides, they wouldn't have let him get away so easily."

"Chrom, this is terrible!" Lissa cried fearfully. "This man's lucky to be alive... We have to do something!"

"Well, what do you propose we do?" Chrom asked. Lissa stumbled to find an answer, but couldn't think of one.

"I...I don't know!"

Suddenly, a small groan caused them to turn their attention to the unconscious man. His eyelids squeezed shut for a moment, before he opened them, blinking at the sudden onslaught of light. Chrom couldn't help but let out a small breath, but not only because the stranger was awake. His eyes were a dark violet, almost as dark as the amethysts in Yllistol's treasury.

"I see you're finally awake," Chrom said, leaning over the man. The stranger's attention quickly flickered from the prince to the blonde girl, and then back again, not sure what to make of the situation.

"There are better places to take a nap than on the dirt, you know," Chrom chuckled, and extended his arm. "Here, give me your hand." The younger man took Chrom's hand, and he noticed a dark tattoo on his left hand: six eyes, all connected by one curved line. Blinking, the strange symbol disappeared, and before he could dwell on it further, he was pulled to his feet.

"Are you all right? Chrom asked the stranger. He nodded, although his posture suggested otherwise.

"Yeah," he said, unease lingering in his mind, "Thanks Chrom."

"So you know who I am then?" The stranger's eyes widened in panic slightly, unsure as to what was going on.

"No...I mean, yes...Well, actually...It just sort of...Came to me..." he stammered, trying to make heads and tails of his situation. "I'm sorry, but I can't remember much." Chrom's eyebrow rose in slight disbelief, and he crossed his arms.

"Well, do you at least know your name?" he asked the stranger. The other man shook his head sadly, wincing slightly as his mind drew up nothing but blanks.

"Nothing...Nothing comes to mind," he sighed.

"Hey, I've heard of this!" Lissa cried out. "It's called amnesia!" The young man blinked a couple of times, looking at Lissa from the corner of his eyes. As his gaze locked with her eyes, he could only think one thing.

Amnesia?

"It's called a load of Pegasus dung," Frederick growled, his Silver Lance ready in his hands. "We're supposed to believe that you know Chrom's name but not your own?" Leveling the sharp spear, he pointed it threateningly at the stranger, scowling all the while.

"But it's true," the young man said, sweat forming on his forehead. Chrom placed a hand on the lance and lowered the point to the ground.

"What if it is true, Frederick?" he asked, glaring at the Great Knight. "We can't just leave him here, alone and confused. What kind of Shepherds would we be if we did?" Frederick slowly nodded once, but kept his glare focused at the young man.

Wait, the young man thought. Did I hear that right? 'Shepherds'? They tend sheep...in full armor? What kind of crazy idea is that?

"Very well, milord," Frederick said, never taking his eyes off of the stranger for more than a moment, "But I would advise caution all the same." Lissa took the time to whack the Great Knight in the head with her staff again, before turning to Chrom.

"Then it's settled, right?" she said, saying it as if it were a statement instead of a question. "We'll take him to the nearest town. Maybe someone there'll know what to do with him!" Chrom nodded his head, and Frederick grunted his approval. The young man looked at the girl as if she had just grown another head, her voice having snapped him back into reality.

"Wha...Wait!" the young man exclaimed, panic evident in his eyes and voice. "Don't I get a say in this!?" Lissa giggled, and tapped him lightly in the forehead with her staff.

"Nope, not really," she chimed, smiling innocently. She started to walk away, only to stop suddenly. "Oh yeah, that's right! I almost forgot." She ran back to Frederick, and grabbed the cloak off of his horse. "This is yours, I believe."

The young man held the violet cloak in front of him, staring at it for a moment, before shrugging it on. Although he had little to no memory, something told him that the cloak was his. "Come on, time waits for no one!" Lissa called out. Turning his head, he saw that the gorgeous girl and the irritable horseman had gone ahead, but Chrom couldn't be seen.

"I believe this is yours as well, friend," Chrom said from behind him. Turning, the stranger saw Chrom handing him a book with a yellow cover. "Don't worry, we'll hear your story out once we reach civilization: open fields aren't really good places to have conversation in for long these days." Taking the Tome, the young man followed Chrom as they hurried to catch up to Chrom's companions. But the stranger couldn't help but feel a sense of foreboding-or was it excitement?-in his mind.

Following them is probably going to be either a really good idea...or a really bad one, he thought to himself.

The quartet of Frederick, Chrom, Lissa, and the young man continued to walk along a dirt road which, to the young man's knowledge, would hopefully lead them to a town. As they continued on their way, the young man had taken in the scenery, watching the white clouds roll along a sapphire blue sky. He normally would've been enjoying the beautiful landscape, if he didn't have an angry horseman glaring at the back of his head constantly.

Why can't I remember anything? he asked himself. Why is it that this cloak and spellbook feel familiar, but I can't remember where from? And most importantly, what the hell is my name!?

"So, I am to be your prisoner now?" the young man said, hoping to make some more sense of his current situation. Chrom looked over his shoulder, smiling sympathetically.

"Of course not!" the prince said. "As soon as we know that you're no enemy to Ylisse, you'll be free to go." Lissa nodded in agreement, having decided to turn around and walk backwards a while ago. The young man couldn't help but gaze into the girl's eyes for a few seconds every now and then, captivated by the silver blue orbs.

"Ylisse?" he asked, tearing his gaze away from Lissa. "Is that where we are?" Frederick scoffed from behind the young man.

"Somebody give this actor praise: he plays quite the fool!" Frederick said, suspicion laced throughout his voice. "The furrowed brow is quite convincing..." Chrom stopped suddenly, and turned around, a disapproving look on his face.

"Frederick, please," Chrom said disdainfully to the Great Knight, before turning to the young man. "We are currently within the Haildom of Ylisse, which is ruled by our Exalt, Emmeryn." Chrom clapped the young man's shoulder, before continuing. "I suppose introductions are in order."

"I'm Chrom, but you knew that already," he said, saying the last part with a chuckle. Wrapping an arm around the blonde girl's shoulder, he introduced her next. "The delicate one here is-" His introduction was cut off by the girl's staff being slammed down onto his foot.

"I am not delicate!" she cried, glaring at her brother, before turning back to the young man, her smile returning. "Ignore my brother; he's got a thick head. I'm Lissa! It's a pleasure to meet you." Taking the young man's hand, she shook it, causing small sparks of electricity to run through his skin.

"You're lucky it was us Shepherds who found you, and not bandits. Otherwise, you would've been in for a much ruder awakening!" she continued, releasing the stranger's hand.

"Wait...The three of you tend sheep? In full armor?" the young man asked, still confused about the whole 'Shepherd' business. Chrom laughed, finding the stranger's confusion hilarious.

"We aren't really shepherds," he explained. "You see, the Shepherds are a small faction of the Ylissian military, but we're also a vital part of it, too. It's a dangerous job, to be sure. Just ask Frederick the Wary here." Chrom gestured to the Great Knight behind the young man, who scoffed.

"A name that I shall carry with pride," he said, muttering "Because Naga forbid at least one of us has some modicum of caution," immediately afterward. The young man chuckled, and extended his hand to Chrom.

"It's a pleasure to meet you all," he said. "My name's Drake..." His eyes, along with Chrom's and Lissa's, widened at the revelation. "That's strange...I just remembered my name." Frederick scoffed, glaring at Drake from behind.

"Sure you did," he muttered threateningly. Chrom silenced the Great Knight with a glare, and took Drake's hand.

"Well, at least that's one mystery solved," he said. Turning around, he motioned for the others to follow him. "Come on, we should be at the town before long. Then we'll-!" Whatever else he had to say was cut off by Lissa's scream.

"Chrom! Look, there's smoke!" she screamed. Chrom dashed towards the top of a hill, and gasped. The whole town was on fire, and there were gruff-looking men running around the streets, burning everything in sight that had no value.

"Damn bandits!" Chrom cursed, tightening his grip on his blade. "Lissa, Frederick, with me! We must defend the town! Drake, you stay here." With nary another word, he slid down the hill towards the burning town, Lissa and Frederick not far behind.

Drake turned to run, freedom at his grasp, but stopped. He had no memory, no one to go back to. If he left, there would be no way for him to survive. Looking to the town, then to the open fields beside him, and back, he gripped his Tome, and quickly followed Chrom.

Running through the debris that was a result of the raid, Drake crouched behind a stack of boxes, and poked his head out, looking at the battlefield. Chrom was engaged in combat with an axe-wielding bandit, while Lissa was hiding behind a pair of barrels not too far away. Frederick was nowhere to be seen, although Drake could guess his location, judging from the screams of pain coming from behind a nearby building.

A scream forced Drake to look at Lissa, who was being assaulted by a sword-wielding bandit. Acting on instinct, Drake thrust his palm forward, and, to his amazement, shot a bolt of lightning at the bandit. Lissa lowered her head, screaming and hoping she wouldn't be killed as the blade came swinging down at her. When she felt no pain, she raised her head, and saw a small electrical blade piercing the bandit's chest. As the bandit collapsed to the ground, dead as soon as the spell hit his back, Drake ran up to her, and slid behind the barrels.

"Drake?" she whispered, glad to be alive. "What are you doing here? I thought Chrom told you to stay behind."

"I know that," Drake replied, "But something told me that I couldn't leave you three to fight this alone. Besides, there's also an old adage about 'safety in numbers' that comes to mind." Drake and Lissa leaned out from behind the barrels, and saw a lance-wielding bandit sneaking up on Chrom as he was engaged in his battle.

"Chrom! Behind you!" Lissa cried out, before seeing Drake rush at the three warriors, the sword that Lissa's assailant used in his left hand. Emitting a threatening war cry, Drake slashed at the bandit with the blade, taking him out with one strike. Chrom took the opportunity to run the stunned axeman through with Falchion.

"I thought I told you-!" Chrom started, before Drake cut him off.

"Yeah, yeah, I know" Drake said, "I was supposed to stay behind. I already had this whole conversation with Lissa." Drake clapped Chrom's shoulder, and smiled. "Besides, these bandits need to be taught a lesson." Frederick came riding up beside Chrom just then, his lance dripping with water and blood.

"Milord, the bandit's leader is holed up by the church. Do we have a plan of action?" Chrom shook his head, not entirely sure what to do next. A quick snap drew his attention to Drake, whose eyes seemed to sparkle mysteriously.

"I've got an idea," he said, his voice brimming with confidence. If Chrom didn't know better, he'd have sworn that the man standing before him was an entirely different person. "Chrom, is there another path to the church than the one going directly across the canal?" Chrom saw what Drake was planning immediately, and gave off a feral smile.

"There is," he said, pointing to the alleyway Frederick was once in. "Just go through that alley."

"Good, then you and Frederick will attack from the front, while I attack from the side, with Lissa acting as my support. A pincer attack that they'll never see coming." With a nod, Chrom raced towards the church, Frederick close on his heels. The Great Knight glared at Drake before disappearing from sight, as if to say 'I still don't trust you.' Drake waited for a moment, before turning to Lissa, and motioning for her to follow him.

"Come on," he said. Taking Lissa's hand, he and Lissa ran into the alley to complete their part of the plan. As they rounded a corner, Drake pulled back, arrows whizzing through the alley. Sticking his head around the corner, he saw two Archers running towards him, cocking their bows.

"Lissa, is there anything you can do with that staff?" The blonde girl nodded, twirling her staff in her hands. Before she could answer, the bandits turned the corner, and fired at the duo. Dodging the projectiles, Drake dashed forward, and cut the first Archer's bow in half, before felling him with one thrust of the sword. The other bandit fired an arrow at the young man before turning tail, shooting it straight into Drake's shoulder. Crying out in pain, Drake dropped his sword, and shot forth another bolt of lightning, this one more powerful than the last. The bolt struck home, and the bandit collapsed, dead before hitting the cobblestones.

"Damn!" he exclaimed, pulling the arrow out. Luckily, it wasn't barbed, or else it would've hurt a lot more. A blue light popped into existence from the corner of his eye, and Drake turned to see Lissa's staff glowing.

"I can't really fight at all," she said, her eyes closed as she focused on healing Drake's wound, "But when you, Chrom, or Frederick get hurt, I'll be the one patching you back up. That's what Clerics do." The light surrounded Drake's arm, and the wound closed, Drake hissing in slight discomfort all the while. As the light disappeared, Drake flexed his arm: it was sore, but no major muscles had been torn, or, if they were, Lissa had done an excellent job at fixing them.

"Thanks, Lissa," he said, picking his blade up from the ground and sheathing it. "I owe you." Gripping his Tome even tighter, the duo ran to the end of the alley, and saw Chrom fighting the bandit leader on his own. The leader was an intimidating fellow: red war paint on his bare chest and face, a scraggly beard, and eyes that just glared 'Try to kill me, if you dare.' Frederick was holding his own against three other axemen, but was quickly tiring.

"Here, sheepy sheepy," the bandit said, taunting Chrom, "Come to the slaughter!" Catching Falchion on the head of his axe, the bandit leader flicked the sacred blade out of Chrom's grasp, before backhanding the prince, sending him sprawling to the ground. The bandit leaned back to bisect Chrom, when a bolt of lightning knocked the axe from his hand into the nearby canal. Turning, he glared at the intruder, before a blade was struck into his stomach.

"Never drop your guard, bandit," Drake growled, pulling his blood-covered sword from the bandit's midsection. "Who knows, some of those you prey on may turn out to be wolves in sheep's clothing." The bandit's eyes glazed over, before he fell into the canal, his body floating face-down. Seeing their leader dead, the three bandits harassing Frederick dropped their weapons and fled into the hills, back to wherever they came from.

"That's the last of them, I suppose," Drake said, pulling Chrom to his feet. Steadying himself, Chrom watched as Lissa ran over to Frederick, frantically checking his armor for penetration marks.

"For now," Chrom replied, clasping Drake's shoulder. "You really are full of surprises, aren't you? Magic, tactics, and swordsmanship! Perhaps-!"

"Perhaps he can fully explain to us who he really is," Frederick interjected, riding up just then, Lissa coming up behind him, his lance poking into Drake's shoulder. Drake sighed, and turned to Frederick, his gaze even and cool.

"I understand your skepticism, Sir Frederick," he said, staring into the Great Knight's eyes, "But I can't even begin to tell

you who I was before you three found me." Lissa glared daggers at Frederick, before turning to Drake, her eyes sparkling.

"Well, I believe him!" she said. "I mean, he did save my life. Plus, he looks like a nice guy. Right, Chrom?" The prince nodded, and he laid his gaze on Drake.

"Not only did you keep my sister safe, but you also helped defend an Ylissian village. That's enough proof for my heart."

"And your mind, milord?" Frederick asked, his face as stoic as ever, "Will you not heed its council as well?" Before Chrom could answer, an elderly man approached the quartet and hailed them.

"Thank you, Shepherds!" he said, taking Chrom's hand and shaking it. "Please, you must stay the night. We'll throw an honorary feast for you!" Frederick slowly shook his head, smiling gratefully.

"We thank you for the offer, good sir," he said, "But we must respectfully decline. We must make haste for the capital." Lissa, however, had other ideas.

"Dark meat only for me, please. Medium-well done, no salt in the soup...Wait, Frederick, what!?" Turning to the Great Knight, she stared at him, a crestfallen look on her face. "But it'll be dark soon!"

"And once it gets dark, we'll make camp like we always do," he said, not unkindly. "Besides, you're the one who insisted on coming with us." Lissa pouted, and looked to the ground in defeat.

"Frederick? I hate you sometimes, you know that?"

Their laughter echoed throughout the village as the quartet continued to march onward, accepting thanks from the villagers as they went.

Lissa looked forlornly at the piece of meat in front of her. Poking it with her finger, she looked at Chrom disdainfully.

"Bear?" she asked with a hint of revulsion in her voice. "Really, Chrom? Couldn't you have gotten something normal people eat? Like deer or rabbit or...or deer?"

Chrom looked at his sister, a quizzical look in his eyes. "What's wrong with it?" he asked. "Meat is meat, no matter where it came from." Taking a bite out of his meat, he swallowed it, and looked back at Lissa. "Besides, it's been forever since I last had it."

The quartet had travelled half of the remaining distance to the capital when darkness had started to settle in the forest. Breaking camp, Frederick had gone to gather firewood, which was in considerable abundance, and Chrom had dispatched a curious bear that had wandered by, providing a meal for the travellers.

"There's a very good reason why!" Lissa cried, closing her eyes and shaking her head. "You're messing with the food chain! Right, Drake?"

Drake looked up from where he was sitting, a piece of bear meat hanging from his mouth. "Sorry, Lissa," he said, swallowing what he had in his mouth. "You were saying something?" Lissa turned away and stared into the darkening trees.

"Ugh, forget it," she said, her face blanching. "I can't believe you can actually eat this..."

"Well, once you actually get a taste for it, it's not that bad," Frederick said, taking the spot in between Lissa and Drake. Lissa glared daggers at the Great Knight.

"Yeah?" she asked, a tone of mockery in her voice, "Then why aren't you having any, huh?" Frederick's eyes widened in panic, like a cornered deer before a pack of wolves, as he struggled to find an answer.

"I, uh...Well, that is to say...The reason is...Well..." Frederick's stammering was cut off as Drake chuckled, swallowing the last of his meat.

"Anyone want seconds?" he asked, reaching for the last piece. "If not, I'll take it." Taking it, he tore off a small piece, and popped it into his mouth.

"I suppose anyone would find this delectable after starving for who knows how long," Lissa said, as she finally took a bite, and immediately regretted it. Grabbing her waterskin, she took a decent-sized drink from it, washing the bad-tasting

food down her throat. "Yuck. This tastes like old boots."

Chrom and Drake burst out laughing from Lissa's antics, followed swiftly by Lissa herself. As they quieted down, Drake looked to the sky, and watched the clouds roll across the darkening sky.

If this is to be one of my earliest retained memories, he thought, At least it's a good one. The sound of our laughter ringing through the dusk forest. That's a sound I'll never forget.

Wow, a 4400 word chapter (not counting the Author's Notes)...That's about three times as long as the previous chapter. Yay for me! ...But in all seriousness, thank you guys so much for the support I've been receiving. A couple of followers, a favorite or two...and my first reviewer! I never dreamed how just one 1500 word prologue would work out so well for me (I hope...We'll see!).

Before I leave, I just want to clarify three things: first, for those who are confused as to what Chrom is doing in the beginning, it's a technique I call "Shadow-Dueling". It's a practice technique in which you, basically, fight your own shadow. I'm not sure if it's an actual thing, but whatever.

Second, and this was brought up by my first reviewer, Gunlord500, for those of you who are worried that I'll be sticking too much to the plot: don't worry. I won't be using all of the Paralogues, but instead be combining some of them into whole segments (for example, later on in the story, I'll be combining two of the children's Paralogues), and I will also be including some vignettes that occur in between segments of the story, with the first one coming up in a couple of chapters. These vignettes will detail the interactions that Drake has with the current Shepherds, although I won't include all of the Shepherds in most of them. There may also be some that focus centrally on a few specific characters, so...I'll warn you when those show up.

Third, Chrom's age. I said he was about twenty-four in the prologue: that will have significance later. Currently, he's three years older than Drake, which puts him at twenty-one.

I've got nothing more to say, so I'll see you guys when the next chapter rolls into station.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Note: Hello, everyone! The Servant of Grima here, and it's time for another chapter in the Fell Dragon Chronicles! Now, before we begin: remember how I said I wouldn't stick to the plot too much? This chapter's an example. Chapter Two focuses on the first chapter in the game, but it will play a much different role here than it does in game. Just...read along and you'll see.

Nothing left to say, so let's get started!

Chapter Two

The castle was burning. Mysterious creatures were doing battle with soldiers clad in blue. The creatures had blood red eyes that struck terror into the soldiers' hearts. As one was killed, it dissipated into a dark violet mist, and another charged in to take its place. In the center of it all, a young warrior, wielding the sacred blade Falchion, fought alongside two others. The first, a young man, no older than twenty, with silver-green eyes and dirty blonde hair, blocked an incoming axe with the edge of his sword, a golden katana with a ruby embedded in the hilt.

"Is that the best you have, scum?!" he cried out, flinging the axe out of the creature's hands and into the body of a second, dropping it instantly. "Come, and face the wrath of Mystletainn, the blade of heroes!" Stabbing the blade into the disarmed creature, he turned and blocked another sword with his buckler, before slashing through both of the monsters.

"Owain, this is not the time for theatrics!" the girl, who looked to be about a year younger than Owain, shouted, before running three of the creatures through with her Silver Lance. As they vanished into nothing, she wiped her forehead, her dull lavender hair shimmering white in the flames. Her brown eyes sparkled with a dark enthusiasm, as if she was tired of the battle and wanted it to end as soon as possible.

"Sorry, Cynthia," Owain said, deflecting another axe aimed at his head, before killing his attacker, "But it's kind of hard when I've been like this for most of my life." Cynthia sighed, stunning her next adversary with a well-placed kick, before Owain killed it.

"Marth, how long have we got?" Cynthia turned to the third figure. The young man, who looked similar to Chrom, except for the blue mask covering his face, took out six of the approaching creatures with one swing of Falchion, before holding a fist up.

"Got it," Cynthia nodded, before emitting a shrill whistle. Seconds later, a white winged horse, her mother's Pegasus, swooped down from the dark skies through a hole in the ruined castle, and crushed some of the creatures underneath its hooves, before Cynthia climbed onto it, Owain following soon after.

"Are you sure you'll be fine, Marth?" the girl asked the remaining figure. He turned to his two comrades, and spoke, but his words couldn't be heard. Cynthia nodded, and, along with Owain, rode off towards the mountains. As they disappeared over the fiery horizon, Marth continued to fight alongside the soldiers, killing more of the creatures, before a large, black tail crushed most of the castle, killing everyone inside it but Marth.

"SO, IT SEEMS TO HAVE COME TO THIS," a thunderous voice boomed in the silence. Six bright red eyes suddenly burst to life only ten meters in front of Marth, before the head they belonged to rose. The eyes belonged to the menace that Marth and his comrades had been fighting since their parent's death, the leader of these foul creatures; Grima, the Fell Dragon.

"ARE YOU SCARED, LITTLE HUMAN?" the dragon asked, mocking Marth all the while. "YOU SHOULD BE. AFTER ALL, I WAS THE ONE WHO KILLED YOUR PARENTS." The monstrous foe swished his head, his large, bone-white horns demolishing the rest of the castle. "I ONLY LET YOUR LITTLE RESISTANCE KEEP FIGHTING BECAUSE I BELIEVED IT WOULD DIE OUT IN A YEAR OR TWO. BUT, TO HAVE IT LAST FOR HALF A DECADE...THAT WAS UNEXPECTED. NOW, HOWEVER, YOUR FUTILE STRUGGLE ENDS WITH YOUR DEATH!" The dragon opened its great maw, and lunged at Marth. Holding Falchion towards Grima, Marth cried out, but, whether it was in defiance or out of fear, it was impossible to tell...

Chrom's eyes burst open, awakening himself from sleep. Rising into a sitting position, he looked around the camp, taking in what little could be seen in the dying light of the fire's embers. Frederick lay sleeping against a tree, in the only possible way for him to sleep comfortably in all that armor. *How he can sleep like that, I'll never know*, Chrom thought. Soft snores came from Lissa's direction, her head resting against Chrom's bedroll like it was a pillow. Drake, however,

was nowhere to be seen. Looking behind him, Chrom found the mysterious man sitting on a log, staring up at the stars, about ten meters away.

"A copper for your thoughts?" Chrom asked, walking over to Drake. Drake turned, his hand grasping the hilt of the sword he had taken from the bandits, and sighed.

"Trying to remember anything else from your past life?" Another nod from the young man. Chrom sat down beside Drake, and also looked at the stars. "My mother once told me that stars are the souls of great heroes, recognized by the Divine Dragon herself. She also told me that, sometimes, a memory can disappear from your mind, and it will become a star. Maybe that's what happened." Chrom chuckled ruefully, scratching the back of his head.

"Thanks, Chrom," Drake said. Chrom turned to the other man, his eyebrows raised questioningly.

"What for?"

"Two reasons, actually. First, for trusting my story when you found me." Drake shrugged, pausing to collect his thoughts. "Frederick probably would've killed me, had he been alone. Besides, how were you to know if I was lying? I could've been a spy, for all you know." Chrom shook his head, cutting Drake off.

"I knew you couldn't have been one, simply because a spy would've tried to come up with some elaborate story, or had one planned from the start. You told us you had no memory, and a spy with no memory isn't a good spy, if you ask me." Drake laughed at Chrom's statement, his mind slowly easing. "So, what's the other reason?"

"For trying to cheer me up." Drake rose from the log, and turned to the camp. "I'm going to get some sleep. See you in-!" Suddenly, the earth beneath them started shaking. Drake and Chrom were thrown to the ground, leaves and branches falling from the trees. A resounding crash signaled a tree falling not too far away. As suddenly as it had started, however, the tremor ended, leaving only silence.

"What the hell was that?" Chrom said, rising to one knee. Drake stood up, his legs shaking, and dusted his cloak off. "Ylisse normally doesn't get earthquakes." Drake looked to the sky, and his jaw dropped.

"I don't think that was an earthquake, Chrom," he said, pointing to the sky. "I may not have any memories, but I'm pretty certain that earthquakes don't form giant eyes in the sky." Chrom looked at Drake questioningly, before turning to the sky himself. What he saw astounded him.

Situated in the dark sky was a large, crystalline eye, surrounded by strange glyphs on all sides. The eye burst open, its draconic pupil glaring down at the two of them, before two humanoid silhouettes formed within it. They grew larger, almost as if they were walking closer, before falling to the ground with a thud. Silence dominated the air for a few moments, before the figures shambled through the bushes, groaning in an animalistic manner. Their heads rose, and they opened their eyes. Their eyes blazed blood red, and they growled menacingly.

These are the creatures from my dream, Chrom realized, gasping inaudibly. Drawing Falchion, Chrom rushed at one of the creatures, stabbing it before it had a chance to react. The creature roared, and raised a blade to strike Chrom down. Chrom shoved the creature back with his boot, and blocked the second creature, who had tried to kill him with an axe.

Drake rushed forward, lashing out with both palms, sending a condensed sphere of lightning at the axe-wielding creature's head. It stumbled back from the impact, sparks dancing through its body, before the blade of Falchion sliced it in half. The eyes lost their shine as the monstrous being groaned its last, before it dissipated into a dark violet mist.

"Thanks, Drake," the prince said. Drake nodded, before noticing the other creature, the one Chrom had initially wounded, rising from the ground. Thick, violet smoke poured from the hole in its torso, like lava from a volcano. The beast roared, and flung its sword at Chrom. Pushing Chrom aside, Drake deflected the incoming blade with his own, causing it to fly into a tree-the very same tree upon which Frederick lay asleep, only inches above his head.

The creature hissed in defiance, and turned to flee, only for a Bronze Lance to come hurtling out of the forest and pierce its neck. Seconds later, a young woman, about twenty-one years of age, burst through the trees, riding on a chestnut-colored mare. Her red armour, which looked to be lighter than Frederick's, rattled as she jerked the thrown spear out of the creature's neck, watching as it vanished into mist.

"Take that, ya ash-faced freak!" she cried, howling what was obviously a war cry. Drake noticed a second figure sitting behind the red-armored rider, looking highly flustered and scared. He was a man, possibly around twenty, who looked to be of some noble standing, as indicated by his dark blue clothes and tan undershirt. His blue hair lay messy from the vicious endeavor of trying to stay on the knight's horse, his dark green eyes darting back and forth in fear. A quiver full of arrows hung at his hip, and a bow was held tightly in his right hand.

"Next time," the nobleman murmured, dismounting from the horse, "Can we please go slower? And possibly stick to the path?" The knight ignored the question, and turned to Chrom, her brown-red eyes blazing with a fiery determination.

"And you said to stay at the barracks," she said, glaring at Chrom without malice. "That does it, I ain't letting you or Frederick outta my damn sight ever again! I always end up missing the fun stuff!" The knight then noticed Drake, and glanced his way, a quizzical look on her face. "Who's the kid?"

"I suppose introductions are in order," Chrom said, clapping Drake's shoulder. "This is Drake. He helped me, Lissa, and Frederick save a village from bandits, even though he has no memory. Drake, this is Sully, one of the Shepherds, and a fine Cavalier at that." Sully's horse took the moment to approach Drake, and sniffed his hand for a moment, before nuzzling him.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Sully said, surprised. "Zandra normally doesn't warm up to strangers this quickly." She slid off the horse, and extended a hand to Drake once Zandra had backed off. "If Chrom says you're a friend, then, hell, you're fine in my book." Drake took the hand, and shook it.

"So, who's the Archer, then?" Drake said, nodding his head to the nobleman. Before Chrom could answer, the Archer scoffed.

"The Archer?" he said, aghast at being addressed so lowly. "If you must know, my name is not 'The Archer'! I am he who strides across history's greatest stage! I am the man who puts the 'Arch' in Archer! I am Virion, the 'Archest-of-Archers'! I will not tolerate-!" Suddenly, animalistic groans came from the depths of the forest, surrounding them. Drake cursed silently.

"Great, more of these things." Turning to Chrom, he motioned to Frederick and Lissa. "Go wake them up, quick. Tell them we've been surrounded, and to prepare for battle." Nodding, Chrom dashed off, leaving Drake alone with Virion and Sully. "Sully, I want you to stay on your horse, and try to kill these...things with that lance of yours. Try to avoid any that have an axe, and aim for those with swords and spears." Nodding, Sully mounted Zandra, and tightened her grip on her lance. "And please, don't throw it again."

Turning to Virion, he gave him his orders. "Ruffles, stay to the back and shoot any that Sully or I miss. If any get close, run away and find another vantage point." Virion scoffed, his face growing even more flustered at having to be ordered by some kid.

"Ruffles!?" he cried, taking offense to the nickname. "My name is Virion, not Ruffles, thank you very much!" The mysterious creatures shambled into the clearing at that moment. *If the behavior of the previous two was any indication, though, Drake thought, Then the shambling won't last long.*

"No time to argue, Ruffles," he said, gripping the hilt of his blade. "Just make with the shooty-shooty!" Swinging his blade forward, he ran at the mass of monsters, Sully quickly overtaking him.

"I come to the rescue and I get scoffed and scorned at..." Virion muttered, before nocking an arrow and firing it into the gut of a nearby creature.

Drake dashed into the mass of creatures, cutting two of them in half before sidestepping a third's lance attack. Slashing down, he broke the lance in half, before picking up the pointed end and hurling that into the side of its previous owner. He saw a brief glimpse of Sully, holding her own against a multitude of the creatures, knocking them back with a few swings of her lance.

"Alright, which one of ya wants your arse handed to ya next!" she cried, galloping a distance away, before charging into them again, killing three of the creatures with her horse's strength alone, and putting down a fourth with a well-placed thrust.

Good to see that she's handling herself well, Drake thought. Turning to face Virion, he saw that the Archer was, unexpectedly, handling himself well, an arrow always in his hand.

I won't be beat by some man in a bib, he thought, seeing the five monsters lying dead before the nobleman. Swinging his blade in a circle, Drake took out four other creatures, before throwing a fifth's axe from its hands into the body of a sixth, killing both. The rumbling of hooves caused Drake to turn his head, and he saw Frederick riding full gallop at the horde, pushing the creatures aside with his lance.

Stopping beside Drake, the Great Knight glared at him, before turning to help Sully out. Chrom came rushing up immediately afterwards, pressing his back to Drake's. "Where's Lissa?" Drake asked, glaring at the monstrous creatures.

"She's safe in Virion's hands," Chrom said, saying, "Hopefully," immediately afterwards. Turning his head slightly, he looked to Drake. "Shall we, then?" Drake grinned in a feral manner.

"Let's." Pushing off of each other, they stabbed into two separate creatures, before decimating the other ones who dared to challenge them. Felling many of the creatures in only two minutes, it seemed victory was theirs. Suddenly, the ones that were left fighting slowly backed away, as a larger version of the creatures trudged forward.

It looked even more menacing than the others, with a black hood covering its face, and sharp, black claws where there should have been hands. It growled menacingly, its red eyes shining even brighter, before it slashed its claws forward, forcing Drake and Chrom to dodge sideways. The beast swatted Chrom aside, before turning and pinning Drake to the ground. Drake struggled to escape, as the monster brought its other clawed hand up, ready to strike.

Chrom rose to his feet, and ran at the monster, hoping to stop it from killing the talented man. The beast's claws came rushing down faster than Chrom could run, and he watched in futile despair as Drake closed his eyes, ready to accept death.

Fate, however, had other plans. As the creature swiped down at Drake, a mysterious figure dashed at the creature and slashed upward, cutting the monster's arm off. The beast roared in painful agony, backing off and clutching at its wound. Drake opened his eyes, and, seeing himself still alive, rose to his feet, taking his Tome from his cloak. Muttering an incantation, he fired forth a strong beam of lightning, cleaving the beast's other arm in two.

Awakening from his stunned state, Chrom leapt at the monster, and thrust Falchion through its chest, as the figure slashed his sword into its head. Silence reigned throughout the battlefield, before the monster finally dissipated into mist. Chrom finally got a good look at the figure, and gasped. *He's the same guy from my dream*, he thought. *This is... Marth.*

The remaining beasts were finished off by Sully and Frederick, leaving the field clear of any evidence of a battle, except for the dropped weapons. Chrom walked over to Drake, and clapped his hand on his shoulder.

"You did well there, Drake," he said somberly. "I had hoped that the rest of our journey would be peaceful, but it was not meant to be." Drake nodded, and looked at his sword. The monster had shattered it when it had pinned him, and it was now no more than a jagged piece of metal.

"Don't worry about the blade, kid." Sully's voice caused him to turn around, where she was handing him another blade, this one made of steel, instead of bronze. "I rarely use it because I like my lance better. You can take it." Nodding his thanks, Drake took the blade, and placed it in the sheath on his belt.

Chrom, meanwhile, had walked up to the man who looked like Marth, and spoke with him. "Thanks for appearing when you did," he said, extending his hand. "If you hadn't shown up, we probably wouldn't have survived." Marth stood there silently, staring into the distance.

"You were awesome!" Lissa said to Marth, running up to them, a tired Virion being dragged by his collar. "I've never seen a person fight like that in my life! Well, except Chrom and Drake." Stopping for a moment, she twirled a finger through her blonde locks, before addressing the masked man again. "What's your name?"

"You may call me Marth." Lissa gasped, while Frederick and Sully stared at Marth, their jaws agape.

"Marth?" Lissa repeated, not believing what she had heard. "As in... The hero-king of old? That Marth?" A nod from the hero-king answered the affirmative.

"You certainly fight like a hero, no doubt about that," Chrom said. "Might I ask where you learned to handle a sword, and from who?" Marth looked to the stars, before answering.

"I am not here to talk about me," he said, his voice completely monotone, "I am here to deliver a message. The world hangs on the edge of darkness. What you saw tonight... That was only a prelude. The beginning of a greater disaster yet to come. The warning has been given." Turning, he ran off, his form being swallowed up by the darkness of the forest, leaving the five Shepherds and Drake confused.

"That was... strange," Drake said after a moment, breaking the silence. The others nodded in agreement.

Although, he thought afterwards, Is it me, or did Marth seem a bit...effeminate?

"He certainly isn't one for conversation, now, is he?" Virion mused, placing his fingers against his forehead lightly.

"Come on, Shepherds," Chrom said, sheathing Falchion, "We should make haste to the capital. The Exalt will want to

hear about this." Everyone nodded, and they set off, the first rays of dawn starting to peak over the horizon.

As the group continued to march through the forest, Sully noticed the new guy, Drake, lingering behind slightly. Slowing her horse's pace down to a walk, she let Drake come beside her. She noticed his eyes were closed, almost as if he was thinking about something.

"Hey," she said to Drake, causing him to open his eyes and look at her. "You're gonna walk into a damn tree if you keep walking like that." He sighed, and nodded.

"Sorry, Sully," he said, casting his eyes elsewhere. "I was just thinking about something." Sully nodded, and they continued to walk in silence for a while. Sully finally broke the silence.

"I heard Chrom say that you have no memory. Is that true?" Drake nodded.

"Yeah, it is. The odd thing is, though, I have all this knowledge of battlefield tactics, spells, and swordsmanship, but I don't know where it came from or how I know it." He chuckled softly. "I couldn't even remember my name for a while, but I knew Chrom's like it was second nature..." Sully burst out laughing, causing Drake to glare at her. "It's not funny."

"I know, I know," she said, wiping a tear from her eye. "But you're right. That does seem odd. Almost unbelievable, in fact."

"You should've seen Frederick's response. He-!" Drake was interrupted as Sully pointed her lance right at his throat.

"Threatened to kill you, kind of like this?" Nodding, Drake backed off, not wanting to be on the wrong end of the spear.

"Yeah, just like that." He shook his head slightly. "I don't expect you to believe me or anything, but-!"

"I believe ya, strange as it may be." Drake looked at Sully, not believing what she said. "I ain't one to lie, Bumblebee. I said I believe ya, and I do."

"Bumblebee?" Drake asked, before shaking his head. "You know, never mind. Thanks, Sully." Looking ahead, the two noticed that the others had gone on ahead.

"Race ya!" Sully said, before kicking her horse into a gallop.

"Hey, no fair!" Drake yelled, running after her. "You have a horse!" Laughing, the two caught up to the others, as the sun started to shine its rays over the trees.

The kid's not half bad, Sully thought to herself. I wonder if Chrom's planning on letting him join the Shepherds. Hell, he'd better be planning on asking Drake to join. We could use someone with his talents.

The morning sun had just finished rising above the treeline when the group reached the capital. Ylissstol was bustling with life-citizens chatting with one another, vendors advertising their wares, the laughter of children playing in the streets. The city had an air of everyday life to it, almost as if no one had heard of the attack on one of their towns, or felt the supposed earthquake from last night.

"It seems the capital wasn't affected by the appearance of those...things," Chrom said, as he, Drake, Lissa, and Frederick walked through the streets towards the palace. Sully had split off from the group to take her horse and Frederick's back to the stables, with Virion following close behind her. "Attempting to chat her up...again," is what Chrom had told Drake when Virion was out of earshot. Indeed, Drake could still make out Sully's voice shouting threats and curses at the nobleman, despite his voice having grown silent a while ago.

Wow, Drake thought, Either he's really desperate, really brave, or really stupid. He had to admit, though, he could see why Virion would be vying for Sully's heart. She had this...charm to her. A charm that spoke of confidence, of a woman who didn't-or wouldn't-need to have a man constantly fretting over her, that she could defend herself and fight back when the gloves came off. Although, the charm was outweighed by her excessive masculinity. *Hell, her arms are as wide as my legs. Yep, he's probably stupid. And too prideful to know when to quit.*

"Thank Naga that's the case," Frederick agreed, his gruff voice snapping Drake back to reality in time to avoid walking into the side of a building.

"So..." Drake said, walking in stride beside Chrom, "The Exalt...Emmeryn, right? What's she like?" Chrom's eyes seemed to shine with pride at the mention of the Exalt's name.

"Exalt Emmeryn is...how can I put it?" Chrom stopped to think for a moment, before continuing. "She's a symbol of hope for the people of Ylisse. Her calm, benevolent personality can warm some of the coldest hearts in the Haildom. I would know; I've seen it firsthand. She's a symbol of-no, she IS peace."

"So, if I do meet her, hypothetically, are there any court manners or rules I should know so that I don't get myself executed?" Chrom laughed at the question.

"Hardly. Emmeryn's the kind of ruler who would rather sit you down and explain the rules of court to you than have you killed." Chrom paused in his walking, sighing. "However, I've been on the end of one of those, and, if you ask me, I'd say execution would be more preferable."

"You know," Drake said, nudging Chrom in the ribs, "If I didn't know any better, I'd say the two of you were related." Before Chrom could retort, the group entered the town square, where a large crowd had gathered. Wondering what all the commotion was about, the quartet squeezed into the crowd, and what Drake saw amazed him.

In the center of the crowd, a young woman, about twenty-five years old, was walking through the square, with about three soldiers guarding her. Her golden blonde hair, held up by a hairpin that looked oddly like a half-halo, shined brilliantly in the sunlight, and it was made even brighter by her robe, which was bright green in color with golden symbols along the collar. The way she walked-never mind the guards-pinned her as royalty, but another detail to the woman stuck out to Drake-a detail so subtle, he was surprised he caught it.

As he gazed at her, smiling and waving to the crowd, even stopping to embrace some smaller kids, Drake could feel an aura of benevolence emit from her. It was almost as if this person was the incarnation of peace itself...Then it struck him. He knew who she was.

"She's the Exalt, isn't she?" he asked Chrom. He simply nodded. "Is it really okay for her to be out here, with so few people to protect her?"

"Ylisse is in a state of peace currently," Frederick explained, as the Exalt and her entourage made their way back to the palace, the crowd dispersing to return to regular daily life. "The people respect the Exalt, and they would never even dream of harming her." Drake nodded absentmindedly, his gaze focused on the rooftops across the square. He could see a figure-probably a young male-with orange-red hair, sitting on the edge of a shop, a large beige bag right next to him. He seemed to be staring after the Exalt, though it was impossible to tell what he was thinking from this distance. The figure stood up after a moment, and leapt down into an alleyway, disappearing from sight.

"And she's the best big sister a girl could ask for!" Lissa said, causing Drake to look back at her. He nodded, smiling, before her words finally sunk in.

"S-Sister!?"

WARNING: Incoming Support moment between Drake and Sully!

...Wait, that already happened? When? **Goes back and reads chapter again** ...Well, damn. It already did. Please ignore the previous warning then.

Anyways, sorry about getting this chapter out a little late. I honestly expected the chapter to be out around the 26th or 27th of August, but a few things contributed to the delay. **cough*Driving lessons*cough*Minor writer's block*cough*Friends hanging out*cough**...In all seriousness, though, I have an announcement to make.

As of the day this story is going up (probably September 1st, 2014), the update schedule will be pushed back somewhat. How much, though, I have no idea. There's a reason for that: school. I will be starting my senior year of high school (which is an important milestone, so yeah for me), so I may not have as much time to write as I did over the summer. **HOWEVER!** One of the classes I'm taking is Creative Writing, so I may or may not work on my story during that class. All depends on what we're doing on that day in class.

One thing I want to mention quickly: ages of characters. My character's ages (for everyone, not just Drake) are all approximations **EXCEPT** for three people, Emmeryn being one of them. My reasoning for her age will be explained once we reach the section that covers Chapter 6 of the game. For those of you who have played that far (and actually **READ** the dialogue), you'll know my reasons.

Also, a mysterious redhead appears! Who could it be? **Makes voice sound like Kefka Palazzo** You want to know? Well...I'm not telling! **Reverts to original voice** At least, not yet. And what was with Chrom's weird dream? Was it a vision of the past? A premonition of the future? Or a combination of both? Only Naga, Grima, and I know. And we ain't telling.

See you guys later for the next Chapter!

Drake: "Please rate, review, favorite, and follow my adventures! Who knows, it may help me regain my memories!"

Chapter 4: Chapter 4

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Note: You guys know how I said that, in a couple of chapters, there would be a vignette dedicated to building up Support between Drake and the current Shepherds? Well, it's time for that moment! But first, we need to conclude the business Drake has with his current situation: him finding out that Emmeryn is Chrom and Lissa's SISTER! So, this vignette will actually start partway into the chapter, plus, it may or may not go into the next one... We'll just see where the Hands of Fate take us. Or is it Wheel of Fate? I dunno. Let's get rolling.

Chapter Three

"S-Sister!?"

Lissa couldn't help but giggle at Drake's reaction. His jaw hung open like a loose bear trap, and his eyes were practically bulging out of his skull.

"That means that you and Chrom are..." Drake couldn't finish his statement, he was so stunned by the revelation.

"The Prince and Princess of Ylisse? Yes, that's correct," Chrom finished for him. Drake stood still for a moment, before kneeling down on one knee.

"Chrom...No, Your Highness...I had no idea...Please, forgive my rude and inconsiderate manners!" Chrom and Lissa both burst out laughing, before Chrom placed his hand on Drake's shoulder.

"There's no need for formalities, Drake," he said, smiling. "I hate formalities. To you, it's just Chrom." Drake stood up, chuckling nervously, his right hand behind his head.

"Well, I can see why Frederick puts up with all the teasing." The Great Knight nodded sternly.

"Yes, unfortunately, I must." He then muttered to himself, "It's just one of the many sacrifices I must make for the realm..." Chrom motioned for the others to follow him.

"Come on, we should let Emmeryn know about what happened yesterday." Nodding their agreement, the four of them made their way to the palace. As they left, however, none of them noticed an orange-red haired figure covertly following them from the shadows.

To call this a palace...understatement of the year, Drake thought as he gazed at the palace's outer walls. It more resembled a fortress than the home of a royal family, and the fact that soldiers stood at exact intervals along the ramparts, with some Archers and Mages among the ranks, wasn't helping to shatter the illusion. As the quartet approached the gates, two soldiers pulled the great wooden doors open, allowing them passage. They saluted to the Prince, not even noticing Drake, and Chrom nodded back to them.

Once the quartet passed through, however, the illusion of the fortress gave way to what Drake thought the outer area of the castle would look like. A large, beautiful courtyard lay in front of them, a gorgeous fountain situated in the center. Neatly trimmed flower bushes grew on all sides of the courtyard, even forming pathways for guests to walk through. All in all, it was paradise.

Chrom walked up to the lone figure standing in the courtyard, a Knight, about thirty-two years old, with dark blonde hair and hazel eyes. His armor was colored grey only, except for a small band of red around his waist. The Knight saw the Prince, and his worried expression soon faded away, to be replaced by one of relief and joy.

"My lord!" he said, embracing the Prince as he might a family member. "I am relieved to see you have returned safely!"

"Knight-Commander Grant, it's good to see you too!" Chrom replied, returning the embrace. The two men released each other before punching each other's shoulders lightly. "I hope Emm hasn't been too worried about me and Lissa?" The Knight laughed, a noise that sounded a little like a dog barking.

"Her? Worry? Ha! The day she starts to worry is the day when I grow wings and fly to the moon! But come! I'm sure the Exalt will be wanting to hear your report." Chrom nodded, and waved his friends over.

"Hey, Lissa," Drake whispered as the quartet was led through the palace by Grant, "What does the Knight-Commander do? Anything special?"

"Well," she replied, "Grant is in charge of all the ground units within the main part of the Yissian military." Drake nodded, looking around at the tapestry hanging from the walls. They seemed to depict the history of Ylisse and the royal family, with each piece of fabric showing a different scene from a long time ago.

"So, if Grant leads the ground troops, who's in charge of the air units?" Before Lissa could answer, Chrom greeted another person, drawing their attention to him.

"Wing-Commander Phila!" he said, taking the hand of a woman, around thirty years old. Phila had silver hair, despite being at such a young age, maroon eyes, and navy blue armor, with gold pauldrons and a gold chestplate.

"Prince Chrom," she said, her face remaining emotionless, "It is good to see you back." She nodded to Grant, before leaving, probably to inform the Exalt about Chrom's return. As Grant continued to lead the quartet through the palace halls, they passed by a group of spear-wielding soldiers-all female, Drake noticed-walking the other way.

Drake noticed that one of the soldiers, a young woman around nineteen years old, kept her gaze focused on the Prince as they walked pass, and he swore that he saw a tear fall from her dull red eyes. The woman quickly glanced away when she saw Drake's eyes looking at her. Drake turned his head to look at the woman as the soldiers left.

She was, in Drake's mind, gorgeous. Her silver armor gleamed brilliantly, as if it had just been completely polished, her gait was confident, yet graceful, and the sun shined on her ruby red hair from behind, giving the illusion that she was wreathed in flames.

Wow, Drake thought, She must get a lot of men pining for her.

The quartet reached a room at the end of one of the side halls, and entered, with Grant standing outside. Lissa quickly walked over to one of the sofas and threw herself onto it in a very unladylike manner, while the other three took to the chairs and sat down in them.

"It's good to be back home," Chrom said, taking a crystal pitcher and poured himself a glass of water. "Do you want some water, Drake?" Drake nodded, taking the other glass Chrom had filled, and held it with both hands, afraid of letting it slip and shatter.

"I am so out of place here," Drake whispered to Chrom. He nodded, and stretched his arms over his head.

"I know the feeling, Drake. I feel the same way sometimes." Drake brought the glass to his mouth, and slowly downed the clear liquid. Placing the glass down, he closed his eyes to think more on his lost memories.

I wonder if I have any relations. What are they thinking now? Could they be worried? They probably are. But...Who was I before? I wish I knew. But, what if there isn't anyone? Perhaps I can build a new life here: get a job, buy a house, start a family...Suddenly, an image of Lissa in a wedding dress popped into his mind, a thought that was surprisingly appealing to him. He quickly shook the image out of his mind, though. No, no, no! What are you thinking? She's a princess, you're just a nobody with amnesia. It would never work out. But...Why was it her, and not the red-haired beauty? His mental debate was, fortunately, cut off as the doors opened, and Emmeryn walked into the room, Phila and Grant following behind her.

"Emm!" Lissa cried as she practically leapt off the sofa and into the Exalt, embracing her tightly. Emmeryn smiled warmly, her blue eyes shining, as she returned the gesture. Drake could once again feel the aura of peace coming from the Exalt, except, this time, it seemed even stronger. Probably because of the closer distance.

"Lissa, it is good to see you are unharmed," Emmeryn said, her voice sounding as melodious as the chiming of church bells. "How did your first expedition as a Shepherd go?" Lissa smiled sheepishly, tapping her left foot, a gesture that Drake found oddly endearing.

"It was fun...Except for the part where we had to eat a bear...And the bugs..." Drake silently chuckled to himself, fondly recalling the moment where Lissa accidentally ate a fly, and the hilarious antics when she thought she was being set upon by hornets, when it was just a swarm of ladybugs.

Lissa released her sister, and Chrom moved in for a light hug. "Welcome back, Chrom," the Exalt said. "I am glad to see you're safe." Chrom nodded, and released his sister.

"I wish I could say the same, Emm. But there are things that need to be said." Drake saw Chrom's hand tighten around his sword's hilt; he was obviously frustrated about the bandit attack. Why, though, he had no clue.

"Plegian bandits attacked Southtown yesterday," the Prince said, a hint of malice in his voice. Grant's eyebrows shot up in surprise, and he growled.

"Damn them!" he cursed. "This is the third time this week!"

"However," Chrom continued, "The town is safe. We managed to beat back the bandits, but only with some help." Emmeryn nodded, her eyes focusing on Drake.

"I assume this is where the young man here comes into play?" she asked, walking over to Drake. As she got closer, he noticed that she was only half a head shorter than him, and that she had a symbol on her forehead: the same mark that was on Chrom's shoulder. "I do not believe we have met."

"This is Drake," Chrom said, standing next to him. "He helped us out in Southtown, as I explained, and he actually saved Lissa's life once. As such, I wish to make him the new Tactician for the Shepherds." Drake bowed to Emmeryn, trying to look as polite as possible.

"Your Grace," he said, "It is an honor to meet you." His eyes widened, however, once Chrom's words sunk in.

Wait...Tactician!?

"Your Grace," Frederick interjected, standing from his seat, just as stunned as Drake with Chrom's revelation, "I find it necessary to state that this man claims to have amnesia, and can remember nothing of his former life. But it is only that: a claim. For all we know, he could be a Plegian spy." Chrom glared daggers at the Great Knight, seeing as they already had this conversation the day before.

"Chrom, do you trust this man?" Emmeryn asked, turning to her brother, the cryptic smile never wavering. He nodded.

"With my life, Emm, and the life of Lissa."

"Then that is enough for me." She smiled to Frederick. "Frederick, your concern is appreciated, however." The Great Knight bowed, his forehead furrowed in irritation. "Come, Chrom, we must prepare for the war council."

"Well," Lissa said, quickly grabbing Drake's arm, "That's our cue! We'll leave you guys alone, and let you focus completely on the council." She all but dragged Drake by his arm out of the room, turning around to wave vigorously. "You all have fun now!"

Emmeryn could not help but crack a very girlish smile, swiftly covering it with a hand, as Chrom shook his head. Lissa was always doing something completely ridiculous to either break tension, get to know a new person, or, most commonly, for no reason at all. It was what made her, in his opinion, one of the greatest princesses he knew. Shaking his head again, he followed Frederick, Grant, and Phila towards the council room, the Exalt walking in step with him.

"Chrom," she said, in a voice low enough that only he could hear it, "I can tell that there's something bothering you. Do you want to talk about it?" He shook his head.

"Thanks, Emm, but I'd rather bring it up during the council. What's bothering me is something that could endanger Ylisse. Perhaps even more than Plegia."

Exiting into the courtyard, Lissa released Drake's arm, and let out a huge sigh of relief. "Thank Naga you were there to get me out of that, Drake!" she said, wiping her forehead with the back of her hand. "I hate war councils." The cool breeze flowing across Drake's face snapped him out of his shock, and he turned to the princess, a questioning look in his eyes.

"Hey, Lissa...I thought Frederick said Ylisse was at peace." She nodded, her head tilting to the side. "So, how come Grant said that this was the third time in a week those bandits were seen?" She sighed, her eyes seeming to lose some of their shine.

"Blame Plegia for that," she said, her voice growing very serious. "Plegia is one of our neighboring countries, although they aren't so neighborly. Their king likes to 'unofficially' send bandits over the borders in order to instigate a war with us."

"But Emmeryn hasn't given in?" She shook her head, her bubbly smile returning.

"Nope, and I doubt Emm will. She's too focused on peace to put us through another war." Drake nodded slowly, only to stop once her words registered.

"Another war?" Lissa's face blanched slightly, and she shook her head.

"Never mind, forget I said anything!" she quickly said, her voice seeming to hide a tone of desperation. Drake decided that pushing the matter further would do more harm than good, so he nodded, agreeing to drop the subject. Lissa

sighed softly with what seemed to be relief, before taking Drake by his hand again.

"Come on, I'll take you to the Barracks. I think it's time to introduce you to the other Shepherds." Nodding his head, the duo ran out of the courtyard towards town, neither one noticing that a figure with orange-red hair was watching them from a nearby tree, a two-layer marble cake in his lap.

"Well, look at that," the thief mused to himself, using his dagger to cut the pastry in his lap. "It seems that the princess has herself an admirer." Placing the piece of cake he had separated from the original in his mouth, he slipped the rest into his bag, and jumped to the ground, before slipping away from the castle through the shadows.

The walk to the barracks was uneventful, with the only distraction being Lissa purchasing an amulet for Drake from an open stall vendor. "As thanks for saving my life," she had told him. Slipping it around his neck, he found that it matched perfectly with his cloak: the slender, white body of the amulet countering the empty black fabric. Making their way through the streets of Yissstol, with Lissa acting as an impromptu guide, pointing out the best places to eat, shop, and have fun (Drake especially found the bookstores interesting, resolving to return at a later point), the duo eventually arrived at the barracks.

"Here we are, Drake. Welcome to Chez Shepherd!" Lissa exclaimed, waving her arms in a dramatic fashion. Immediately, Drake noticed that the Shepherd's barracks seemed...a bit small to be holding what was supposed to be the elite members of a military force. "Well, let's go! Time for you to meet your new comrades!"

Entering into the barracks, Drake noticed a few things right off the bat. First was the open door that looked like it led into a storage room. From what he could see, the room looked pretty barren, except for a few boxes, one of which was filled with apples. Second were the room's occupants, probably the other Shepherds.

He instantly recognized Sully, still in her riding armor, locked in an arm-wrestling match with a twenty-two year old man with spiky blonde hair and blue-green eyes. Leaning against the chair where the man was sitting was a Bronze Axe, presumably belonging to him. His tanned skin rippled with muscles, and Drake immediately pinned him as a Fighter. Oddly enough, he wasn't wearing a shirt.

No armor? Drake thought to himself. *Surely he must know that going into battle half naked is a terrible idea.*

Away from all the action of the arm-wrestling, Virion sat with a cup of tea in his hands, and across from him, a young woman, about nineteen years old, with long, dull brown hair that was braided slightly in the front. Her eyes were of the same color as her hair, but, oddly enough, Drake noticed that they glimmered in a manner that spoke of a person who lacked experience, but was bursting with potential. Her lavender armor was the same style as the red-haired beauty's, so Drake assumed they were both trained in the same manner.

Though why she's here and not the red-haired beauty is beyond me.

The last thing he noticed was the size of the room. It. Was. Huge! The main room had about six doors leading to different rooms, though where most of them lead was unknown to Drake, and there was a kitchen built within the left half of the main entrance, which was obviously the den. The strange thing was, there was a giant suit of armor, completely silver except for some bands of gold on the pauldrons, situated right in the middle of the kitchen.

Before Drake could ask Lissa about the armor, he was shoved aside by an eighteen year old girl, with blonde hair tied in pigtails and piercing ruby-red eyes. Her dress style was similar to Lissa's, pinning her as a noble, except she wore mostly pink riding clothes in comparison to Lissa's sunflower yellow Cleric dress.

"Lissa, my darling!" the blonde noblewoman exclaimed, grasping both of Lissa's hands in her own. "Are you all right? I have been on pins and needles waiting for your return." The woman released Lissa's hands, and then proceeded to circle the princess, her parasol swinging in her hand the whole time. "You were not injured at all during the expedition? Harassed by strangers? Defiled by the very elements themselves?"

"I'm fine, Maribelle," Lissa replied, sighing tiredly. "Really, I can handle a few days of camping." The blonde Fighter looked up from his match, and waved to Lissa.

"Hey, squirt!" he said loudly. "How've you-!" Sully took the opportunity to slam the Fighter's hand to the table, consequentially flipping the man out of his chair and onto the floor with a large thud. Drake cringed slightly at the sight; he knew Sully was strong, but not that strong.

"Yeah!" Sully cried out, punching a fist into the air. "Five in a row!" The Fighter groaned from his position on the ground, and rose to a sitting position, rubbing his right shoulder.

"Bah, Teach just went easy on ya, Sully," he said, slowly standing. He grinned widely, and walked towards Lissa. "So squirt, where's Chrom? You were gone for so long that I thought he'd gotten captured, and without ol' Teach there to bail him out, who knows what would've happened?" Lissa snickered for a moment after 'Teach' had finished.

"So it's 'Teach' now, is it Vaike?" she said in a mocking tone. "I thought you had to be born without brains, but you can teach it?" The man, Vaike, jabbed his thumb into his chest in a triumphant manner.

"Ha! Don't go underestimat' the Vaike!" His eyes seemed to sparkle with pride, before Lissa's words registered in his mind. "Wait...Was that an insult?!" Lissa giggled lightly, but, before she could continue to jab at Vaike's pride, the brunette woman, having noticed the princess, turned and approached them, stopping about five feet from them.

"Beg pardon, but when may we see the Captain, Lissa?" the woman asked. Her voice grew softer as she finished her question, betraying a decent amount of nervousness, something Drake picked up on. Maribelle rolled her eyes, and tapped her parasol against the wooden floor.

"Poor Sumia," she said both compassionately and sarcastically. "She has been beside herself with concern for Chrom. Her eyes never left the horizon, as she waited for any sign of his return." Her tone of voice irritated Drake, and he immediately decided that he didn't like this girl at all.

"Aww, that's so sweet of you to care, Sumia," Lissa said, trying her best not to giggle. Sumia blushed profusely.

"Well, I...That is...He's our Captain, and the Prince, so of course I was worried!" she stammered out, her face blushing even more than it was previously.

"So, who's the new guy?" Vaike asked, gesturing towards Drake. That is, until Sully slapped him with the back of her hand.

"What the hell's wrong with ya memory, you damn idiot?" she asked the Fighter as he massaged his head. "This is the guy I was telling you about. The one who helped Chrom save Southtown."

"Exactly!" Lissa exclaimed, her eyes sparkling again. "Everyone, this is Drake, the Shepherd's new Tactician! You should see the awesome tricks he's got up those sleeves!" Virion nodded slightly, his brow furrowed in annoyance upon recalling the events of last night.

"Oh yeah?" Vaike asked. "Can he do this?" Leaning back, he beat a fist on his chest, and released a hearty belch that lasted for around five seconds. Drake chuckled silently, deciding he liked the other man's friendly and carefree attitude.

"I can see you have much to teach me in the belching arts, o illustrious Vaike," the Tactician said, eliciting a glare from Maribelle.

"Vaike, that was abhorrent!" Maribelle all but shouted at the Fighter. "Must you baseborn oafs pollute even the air with your buffoonery!?" Suddenly, she turned on Drake, her parasol swinging right at his face. Had he not raised his arm to block it, he probably would've gotten a nasty scar, if not lose his right eye completely.

"And you! Do not encourage his grotesque behavior! I had hoped you were cut from finer cloth, but it seems my expectations were set much too high." Withdrawing her parasol from Drake's arm, she walked past him and out the door, away from the barracks.

What did I do wrong? Drake thought to himself.

"Don't worry about Maribelle," Sumia said, placing a tentative hand on his shoulder. "She just...warms to people slowly."

"Or burns too quickly," Lissa interjected in a joking manner.

"And here I thought she was just a prissy snob..." Vaike muttered low enough so that only Drake could hear. The Tactician smiled; he definitely felt that the two of them could be great friends.

"I just hope that she will warm up to me: I'd rather not have infighting within the Shepherds. Anyways, it's a pleasure to make your acquaintances!"

The rest of the morning and the beginning of the afternoon were mostly filled with Drake and his new comrades idly talking with each other, with Drake learning what each was capable of in battle, how they all joined the Shepherds, and their favorite pastimes, among other things. The part that Drake was dreading the most was explaining that he was an amnesiac, and how the others would react. His fears were assuaged, however, when Sully told him that she had told

them everything, and, just like her, they all believed him (except Maribelle, who wasn't around to hear Sully's explanation at the time, according to Sumia).

After the conversation died down, and lunch had been served by Lissa, which caught Drake completely off guard, most of the Shepherds separated, with Lissa heading back to the castle, and Sumia, Vaike, and Sully headed for the town to stock up on more supplies, much to Sully's chagrin. Drake had decided to practice his skills with the blade in the small training yard behind the barracks.

Taking one of the many wooden blades from a rack by the door, he set up three training dummies, each one holding a sword, and tapped his blade against the side of one sword. Leaping back, he thrust his weapon into the first dummy's torso, before side-slashing through it and knocking the second dummy's blade out of its hand. Kicking off of it to keep up momentum, he delivered a powerful uppercut swing to the last standing dummy, and not only cleaved it in two, but shattered his own training weapon as well.

"Well I'll be damned!" Drake turned around to find Sully standing in the doorway, an apple in her hand. Setting it down on the windowsill, she walked up to the Tactician, and lightly slapped his shoulder. "Who would've thought that you had the strength to shatter a wooden sword into so many damn pieces!"

"Yeah, my bad," Drake chuckled nervously. "Honestly, I didn't even mean for that to happen. It just kind of...did." Sully laughed, and drew her lance, stabbing it into the ground.

"How's about a little competition, Drake? You against me, last man standing, training weapons only." Drake opened his mouth to object, but he closed it almost immediately afterwards. He figured that this would be the perfect opportunity to see his comrade's fighting style firsthand, figure out her strengths and weaknesses, and offer advice if necessary. Turning his head towards the weapons racks, Drake nodded.

"You want to use a sword or a lance?"

The sun was nearing the horizon when Vaike and Sumia returned to the barracks, laden with supplies. Or at least, Vaike was laden with supplies. Sumia had dumped everything she was supposed to carry onto him, and she was now reading the newest book in the 'Wyvern Wars' series. She was about halfway done with the second chapter when they entered, only to find the den empty.

"Where is everyone?" Vaike asked to no one in particular. "Don't tell me they went out for dinner and didn't invite ol' Teach?" Sumia drew a bookmark from the front cover of her book and marked her page, before setting it down on the center table, alongside the supplies. Suddenly, she heard the distinct thud of wood on wood, and looked out to the training field. She motioned for Vaike to follow her, and the two went outside, and stood alongside Virion.

"What's going on, Virion?" Vaike asked the Archer. Virion simply pointed out to the field, and Vaike glanced over, and his jaw dropped.

Drake and Sully were dancing around each other, their training blades slashing at fast speeds, like a warhorse in full gallop. They were fighting with their all, neither seeming to tire, and unwilling to surrender. Drake's blade came at Sully's hip, only for her to swiftly parry it, and she countered with a swift thrust. He spun to the left, dodging the attack, and uppercutting her to throw her off balance. She blocked with her sword, and the fight continued.

"The lovely Sully and our brilliant Tactician Drake have been fighting each other for over three hours, nonstop," Virion explained. He sipped his chamomile tea, contemplating who the victor would be.

"How many rounds have they each won?" Virion turned to Sumia, and shook his head slowly.

"This is still the first battle, my dear Sumia. Neither one has dealt a blow to the other at all." She gasped, and quickly mouthed 'No way.' Vaike, however, was hooting and hollering, waiting to see who would win.

"Yeah, get 'em, Sully! Give him a blade to the knee that he'll never forget! Whack him, smack him, throw him to the ground!"

The result, however, was not what any of the three Shepherds expected it to be. Drake bounced off a nearby pillar, after having been shoved back by Sully's latest attack, and swung his blade as fast and hard as he could. Sully lifted her blade to block, and the two weapons collided with such force that it sent dust flying off the ground and into a ring around the two combatants. As it settled, Virion, Sumia, and Vaike saw that both blades had been shattered, with the wooden shards scattered at Drake and Sully's feet.

The two combatants stared at their weapons for a moment, before bursting into laughter. "I can't believe ya managed to break both of them with one damn swing!" Sully exclaimed after calming down, before sticking her hand out. "You're all right, Bumblebee." Drake took Sully's hand in his own, and shook it.

"Well, it seems you've been busy, Drake." Drake and the Shepherds turned towards the doorway leading to the stables, and there stood Chrom and Lissa, their eyes seeming to glow in admiration for the Tactician.

"Ah, Captain!" Sumia exclaimed, blushing profusely. "I was...I mean we were..." Sumia started to approach Chrom, when, suddenly, she tripped on a training lance that no one ever noticed was there, and tumbled into a weapons rack.

"Sumia!" Chrom, Drake, and Lissa cried out. Chrom ran over to the fallen pile of training weapons faster than Drake could react, and moved a few away to reveal the dazed brunette.

"Owww..." Sumia moaned slightly, rubbing her thigh. Chrom breathed a sigh of exasperation-or was it relief?-and, taking Sumia by her arm, pulled her to her feet in a manner not unlike when a warrior had bested an opponent in a duel. And yet, Drake noticed that Chrom was pulling her up slowly, gently, almost like they were in...

What the hell am I thinking?! Drake thought, subtly shaking his head. *There's no way that's possible. I can't just make assumptions about the Prince.* His gaze quickly fell on Vaike, who was silently snickering and making kissy faces in Chrom's direction.

"You're not hurt, are you?" Chrom asked Sumia, their faces nearly inches from each other as he inspected her face, to make sure she wasn't hurt. She nodded, mumbling something unintelligible. His eyes seemed to glisten with concern. "Those boots of yours bothering you again?" Another nod from the brunette.

"Yes..." she said softly, before vigorously shaking her head. "I mean no! I mean..." She sighed, before blushing even more profusely than before, and looking away from Chrom. The Prince seemed to remember where he was, and backed away, content at finding Sumia unharmed.

"So, what are our orders, Captain? Out with it, damn it!" Sully exclaimed, digging her spear out from where she had planted it, three hours earlier. Chrom turned to the Shepherds, his face growing serious.

"We're moving out to Regna Ferox first thing tomorrow morning to petition the Khan for soldiers." Chrom nodded as he saw the confused looks he was getting, mostly from Vaike. "Yes, Vaike, normally the Exalt would go and make the request in person. However, given the current political climate, we thought it best for her to stay here and reassure the people.

"Now, this mission is strictly voluntary. I'll not force anyone-" Lissa shot her hand up, cutting her brother off.

"I volunteer!" she exclaimed, and Drake noticed that she had somehow managed to walk over to his side without him noticing.

How did she do that? he thought.

"Yeah, count me in!" Vaike hollered, pumping the air with a fist. "You're not ditchin' ol' Teach so easily this time, Chrom!"

"Like I said, Captain," Sully said, thumping her chestplate with a gloved hand, "I ain't letting you out of my sight again. There's no way in hell I'll miss any of the fun!"

Virion sighed, placing his hand on his forehead. "I suppose I'll come, as well. It would probably aid your cause to have some modicum of nobility at your side." Sully backhanded him across his forehead, and hissed something about 'stuffing his bib down his throat if he insulted Chrom ever again.'

Drake shrugged as Chrom turned to him expectedly. "Well, you can't go running off without your new Tactician, right?" he asked rhetorically. Sumia took the moment to cough quietly, drawing Chrom's attention.

"Captain, I'd like to come along as well. But I...I don't...I don't think I'm...Ready for...Combat...Just yet..." Drake could tell she was trying to hold back tears, and made a mental note to talk with Sumia, and help her build up confidence. Chrom smiled sympathetically, and took her chin in the palm of his hand, softly raising her head so that he could look at her eyes.

"Sumia..." he said, pausing for a moment, as if unsure of how to proceed, or just picking his words carefully. "I understand completely. You can keep to the rear and watch us. But there will come a day when you have to fight to protect something or someone close to you. Just stay close to me and you'll be fine." Sumia's eyes brightened significantly after hearing Chrom's words.

"Yes, of course!" she nearly squealed with joy, before composing herself. "I mean...Yes, Captain!" Robin noticed that Vaike had continued the silent snickering, and now Lissa was joining him, which confirmed his suspicions about Chrom and Sumia.

Great, he thought, I'm barracked up with a lovesick teenager as a captain. What could possibly go wrong?

FINALLY! After an entire month full of delays, including, but not limited to: school, a wedding in Colorado, school, fracturing my wrist, and school (did I mention school?), Chapter Four is finally finished! As with most Author's Notes at the end, there are a few things I'd like to point out.

First, I'd like to thank a close friend of mine for the OC of Grant (you'll know who you are when you read this).

Second, I'd like to know something...AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO HATED MARIBELLE THE MOMENT SHE WAS INTRODUCED TO THE STORY, OR AM I JUST PARANOID?! Seriously, as soon as I read her first line in Chapter Two, she appeared to be a completely arrogant b****, and I almost never used her at all. If she weren't such a good healer, I would've benched her for the whole game!

Third, the amulet Drake receives from Lissa has meaning. It's actually based off of an amulet my grandmother bought me when she visited Ireland a while back. Also, I added this little detail so that my Avatar isn't like every single other out there. But what about the fact that Lissa bought it for him? Make your own assumptions, readers.

Fourth, is it me, or did I make Sully swear just a bit too much in this chapter? I dunno.

Fifth, for those of you who don't know French, Chez pretty much means "At the home of" (I think...My French is a bit rusty: please feel free to correct me).

Finally, YES, this is another Chrom/Sumia Fanfiction. Like I said before, it's MY story, so I'll pair the characters up how I want. Besides, they are literally CANON! That ain't Maribelle standing beside Chrom on Ylisstol Castle's balcony in the opening sequence. Or Sully. Or Olivia. Or a female Avatar.

Next time, we delve into my least favorite chapter (joy...) and meet up with two new Shepherds. Until next time, this is the Servant of Grima signing out.

Chrom: "Please rate, review, favorite, and follow our tale. That's a royal decree."

P.S. If I EVER make another reference to the Skyrim meme "Arrow To The Knee" in any form EVER again, in the name of Naga and Grima, someone PLEASE slap me...

Chapter 5: Chapter 5

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Note: So, Chapter Four focuses on the actual second Chapter of the game-not any character introductions (besides Stahl and Miriel). But this Chapter. This...Grima...Forsaken...CHAPTER...I really did not like the second Chapter in the game. While the fight on the Northroad did introduce the Auto-Battle command (which I never use, at all), I feel that it was just used as filler (and an excuse to introduce Stahl and Miriel...Not that they're bad, mind you, but come on. I mean, they could've just very well have been introduced in the beginning cutscene of Chapter Two, or in the next Chapter and the story wouldn't have been affected much...and I'm just ranting now, so I'll shut up).

Anyway, let's get this over with so we can proceed to the more fun chapters.

BTW, I kept forgetting to put this in the other chapters, so I'll start here: All rights are reserved by Nintendo and Intelligent Systems. I do not own any of the characters, places, or names (except for my OC's).

Chapter Four

The first rays of the morning sun shone brightly onto the cobblestone streets of Ylissstol, where a few early risers were just starting the day. A few shops opened their windows, displaying their wares for the people on the streets. Neighbors greeted each other warmly, idly chatting about the most random of things. The sweet aroma of sugar and flames filled the air, coming from a small, yet very popular, bakery not even a block and a half away from the barracks, 'The Laguz Den'. The bakery's door swiftly opened, the small bell on it ringing, as Lissa rushed out, half a croissant in her hand.

"Thank you, Miss Lissa!" the baker inside called out to the princess, as she turned down the main street and ran towards the barracks. Taking a large chunk out of her cinnamon pastry, she dashed past the stores and open-air stalls, only stopping once to admire a pair of embroidered gloves that caught her eye.

I hope I'm not late, she frantically thought as she mentally berated herself for not having a maid wake her up sooner. Reaching the barracks, she burst into the den, and was about to frantically apologize for being late, when she noticed that the den was empty. Sighing inwardly to herself, she turned to leave, only to stop when she heard a light breathing coming from the storage area. It sounded like someone had fallen asleep in there. *Probably Vaike: he did have a couple of mugs of ale last night.*

Her curiosity piqued, Lissa quietly walked up to the storage area, and opened the door. There, she saw Drake leaning against a box filled with Tomes, a pencil and a pad of paper in one hand, deep in sleep. Lissa tip-toed up to the sleeping Tactician, and swiftly slipped the paper from his hand. Looking at it, she saw what appeared to be a rough map of their marching route to Regna Ferox, as well as a list of supplies that everyone would be bringing.

"Drake..." she whispered to herself, "Did you stay up half the night planning all this out?" She looked back at the Tactician, and a light blush came to her cheeks. "You look so peaceful. Maybe I should just...Quietly...Gently..." A small, devilish smirk came to her face, and she reached down to Drake's face and pinched his nose. A few seconds filled with silence passed, then...

"BWARGH!" Drake cried out, throwing his head back to escape whatever was suffocating him, and slamming his head against the wooden box in the process. "Owww..." Slowly opening his eyes, he saw Lissa rolling on the floor in front of him, trying unsuccessfully to contain her laughter.

"BWARGH?!" she giggled, clutching her sides tightly as she stood. "Ah hahaha! That was priceless!" Drake groaned inwardly: he had spent half the night planning the expedition to Regna Ferox, and he was just getting some much-needed sleep when Lissa disturbed him.

"Damn it, Lissa, what was that for?" he asked, rubbing the back of his head gingerly. Lissa smiled innocently, twirling a few strands of hair around her finger.

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Drake growled softly.

"You know full well what I mean, Lissa." Lissa ignored him and placed a small, neatly wrapped package on a box next to Drake, before turning and moving to the door.

"I brought you something to eat, you know." Turning her head, she stared at the Tactician, feigning offense. "You could at least be a little bit thankful. Anyways, you should eat up fast, we're moving out soon." She turned and left, leaving Drake all alone in the storage area. Taking the small package, he unwrapped it to find a sweet roll glazed over with couverture chocolate. Drake also caught the scent of honey wafting up from inside it, causing his stomach to growl hungrily.

Breaking off a decent-sized piece, he popped it into his mouth.

Eh, needs more chocolate, he thought as it slid down his throat, leaving a very sweet aftertaste on his tongue that didn't seem to agree with him. *And a lot less honey; this is way too sweet.*

"Okay...Whose bright idea was it to set out at around nine in the morning?" Drake yawned loudly. The Shepherds, minus someone named Miriel, who would be catching up to them in a while, had set out for the Longfort an hour ago, and the monotonous scenery of the forest path they were travelling through, in addition to his all-nighter, were nearly lulling Drake to sleep again. It was taking all of his willpower just to keep his eyes open and not run into any trees.

"I'm pretty sure it was yours, Drake," Chrom said as he slowed down to walk in pace with his Tactician. "You had said something along the lines of 'Covering as much distance as possible'." From behind him, Drake heard Lissa giggling, and he cursed himself. Why he decided staying up for most of the night before the start of an expedition was a good idea, he would never figure out.

"Shut up, Chrom," he growled without malice, before picking up his pace to walk alongside the small caravan that was carrying their excess supplies: spare weapons, food, bedrolls, and other essentials. Drake saw Sumia leaning against the inner right side of the caravan as he passed, engrossed in her book. *Sheesh*, he thought, *I don't think I've seen her put that book down since we started this trek*. Virion also lay inside the wagon, fiddling with the string of his bow like it was a sitar. Looking ahead, he saw Vaike flexing his arms as they walked, oblivious to the world around him.

Soon, the Shepherds passed through the forest and into an open field, with a small farm off in the distance. Looking towards Sully, Drake nodded his head, and the Cavalier galloped ahead with Frederick to scout out the path. Scanning the horizon, Drake saw nothing out of the ordinary, and was about to continue on his way when a voice called out to them from the forest.

"Wait up, guys! Don't leave without me!" Seconds later, a young man of about twenty-one years of age came running up to them, while he led a horse by its reins behind him. Sweat glistened off of his pale green hair, and his eyes, which were very close to being the same color, looked tired, almost as if he had just woken up within the hour. His armor looked to be similar to Sully's, signifying him to be another Cavalier, except his was a dark green with a couple pale tan circles on the leftmost pauldrons instead of Sully's red set.

The green armored knight approached the Shepherds, before bending over and panting. He had obviously covered the distance from the castle to their current location in a matter of minutes. "Why...Why am I...The last one to...To hear about...The mission?" Lissa took her water canteen from her hip and gave it to the Cavalier, who drank greedily from it.

"Vaike was supposed to tell you last night..." she said, replacing the cap on the canteen. Chrom groaned softly, and turned to Vaike, who had just come back from ahead to see what the commotion was about.

"Vaike..." Chrom growled, "Did you forget to tell Stahl when we were moving out?" The Fighter reeled back in shock, almost as if he had been accused of a murder he had witnessed, yet took no part in.

"What the...Are you crazy, Chrom?!" he exclaimed, his thumb jabbed into his chest, "The Vaike never forgets!" Seconds later, he scratched the back of his head sheepishly. "He just doesn't always remember, that's all."

Drake walked up to the Cavalier, who looked visibly tired. "It's Stahl, right?" Stahl looked up at the Tactician, and a look of recognition-and maybe a hint of admiration-sparked through his eyes.

"Yes sir, that's my name," he said, his tiredness seeming to have vanished instantaneously. "And you must be the new Tactician, Drake." Stahl grasped Drake's hand and shook it vigorously. "Sully told me a lot about you. I must admit, I was kind of surprised that you managed to beat her in a sparring match." Drake laughed at the compliment, even if it was only half true.

"To be honest, Stahl, I didn't actually beat her. Our weapons shattered, so it was a tie in the end." Drake's eyes flashed into a more serious gaze as he finished speaking. "Anyways, I think Sully and Frederick would appreciate an extra set of eyes helping them scout the path ahead." Stahl nodded, needing no more instructions, and mounted his steed, before riding ahead of the group.

"Hey, Chrom?" Drake turned to the Prince after Stahl was gone, his face a mixture of curiosity and confusion. "If Stahl had a horse, why did he run all the way from the castle?" Drake's question caught the Prince by surprise, before he and Lissa burst into laughter.

"Stahl can be a bit...airheaded at times," Lissa said after calming down, although her voice was still tinged with giggles.

"But he's got good swordsmanship and can handle a lance decently well-though not as well as Sully. He's also a really great cook, so at least we won't starve when he's around."

"Well, that's good," Drake said, "Because I'm fairly certain that we'd all die of food poisoning if we let Vaike handle the meals." Everyone except Vaike laughed at Drake's humorous insult to Vaike's pride. The group then moved onward, and after another ten minutes, they caught up to Frederick, Sully, and Stahl, who were waiting for them on a hill, each with a worried look on their faces. Chrom and Drake knew something was up, and rushed to the rider's sides.

"What happened, Frederick?" the Prince asked, his voice going from carefree to authoritative in mere moments.

"A group of those monsters are lazing around about a hundred meters up ahead, milord," Frederick responded. Drake looked down, and sure enough, he could see around twenty-seven of the monsters from two days ago milling around on the other side of a river, over which a bridge crossed.

"Damn it, have the Risen spread this far already?" Chrom cursed. Drake looked at the Prince, a look of confusion lining his face.

"Risen?" he asked.

"That's what the council decided to call those monsters from two days ago," Chrom explained as he effortlessly drew Falchion from its scabbard. "To be honest, giving the monsters a name was the only thing the council could agree upon, besides the organization of this expedition."

Drake nodded, and turned back to the other Shepherds, calling them forward with a wave of his hand. When they were all gathered around, he explained the situation. "Alright, guys, listen up. I assume Sully told you about the creatures that attacked me, Chrom, Lissa, and Frederick?" Every head nodded in affirmation. "Good, then I don't have to spend time explaining about them. To make a long story short, there's a group of them about a hundred meters north of us, just milling around. If they're anything like what we dealt with last time, however, once they get into a fight, that'll all change.

"Now, the Risen outnumber us three to one. But, we have the advantage when it comes to strength, so that balances the odds somewhat. However, I've come up with a new battle formation that may help us in the future, and I have Virion and Sully to thank for the idea." As the Archer and the red Cavalier looked at him in confusion, Drake turned to them and explained.

"Remember two days ago, Sully? You came crashing through the trees with Virion riding alongside you. That's what spawned the idea. Anyways, the formation is thus: two people work alongside each other in battle, complementing each other's strengths and covering each of their weaknesses. Honestly, I don't have a name for it yet, so for now, we'll call it the 'Pair Up' system. Everyone still with me?" After everyone nodded their heads, Drake walked over to the caravan, extracted a large sheet of grid paper and a pencil from one of the boxes inside, and returned to the gathered Shepherds, ready to explain his battle plan.

"Alright, here's what the battlefield looks like," he stated as he drew a winding river through the center of the paper, and thirty-six circles, set in two groups: one of twenty-seven, representing the Risen, and the other nine being the Shepherds. "Stahl and Sully, you two will come in from the sides, and crash through the group, hopefully dwindling their numbers by at least a third, before circling back behind them, and pairing up for the battle. Frederick will then charge in from the front, alongside his partner, Lissa, with Chrom and Vaike following close behind. Virion and I will stay away from the battle, fighting at long-range." After mapping out a rough diagram of the battle's initial moves, Drake turned to Frederick, his eyes ablaze with concern and authority.

"Frederick, your priority is to keep Lissa safe at any cost; she's our only healer, not to mention the Princess of Ylisse. If these Risen have an intelligent leader, it'll have these monsters go after her or Chrom. Vaike," Drake turned towards the Fighter as he said his name, "You need to keep Chrom safe, got that?" Vaike nodded, reaching for his axe.

"Ha, don't ya worry, Drake! Those Risen will be runnin' fer the hills once they feel the sting of my-!" Suddenly, Vaike's face changed from one of eagerness to one of confusion and shock. "Wait...Where's my axe?!" Drake facepalmed himself.

"Vaike, please tell me you're kidding here..." he muttered. Vaike's frantic turning showed otherwise.

"I'm serious, it was here just a minute ago!" Drake growled softly in irritation.

"Damn it...Fine then, change of plans. Vaike, you stay here and keep Sumia safe. I'll team up with Chrom, and Virion will keep Lissa under his watchful eye. Frederick, can you handle being alone?" A nod from the Great Knight answered the question. "Good. Sully and Stahl, your part will remain the same." Vaike looked like he was about to object, but was cut off as Drake turned on him.

"Before you say anything Vaike, let me ask you: do you know why I'm having you stay back here?" Vaike nodded his head.

"Cause I lost my axe, and this is Teach's punishment." Surprisingly, Drake shook his head and placed a gentle hand on the Fighter's shoulder, squeezing it in a reassuring manner.

"That's a very, very small part of it. The main reason is because, without me or Virion here, there's no one to keep Sumia safe from harm. Vaike, you may not be fighting today, but you have the most important part of this plan right now. Don't let me down, okay?" Drake then lowered his voice so only Vaike could hear him. "Besides, we wouldn't want Chrom to feel depressed if his girlfriend died, huh?" Vaike chuckled silently, before nodding.

"Yeah, you're right, Drake. Thanks." He then stood up, and took Sumia over to the caravan, where the two sat down and waited. Drake turned towards the remaining Shepherds, the gentleness of his eyes replaced by a fiery determination.

"Everyone else, get into position!" The Shepherds moved to their designated locations: Virion took Lissa to a small grouping of trees about forty yards away, his recurve bow already strung and nocked, Stahl and Sully mounted their horses on either side of Frederick, and Chrom and Drake stood behind the Great Knight, their blades drawn and at the ready. The Shepherds waited in tense anticipation, the only sounds being the soft whisper of the spring winds, and the moans of the Risen that the winds carried.

"Sully, Stahl, now!" Drake broke the silence with a sharp command. The two Cavaliers charged down the hill, and crashed through the horde effortlessly. As the two riders circled back around, Drake nodded, and Frederick charged down the hill, aiming for the bridge. As the Great Knight neared the mass, Drake saw that the initial charge had killed off only four of the Risen-three from Sully's side, and one on Stahl's-and inwardly cursed, before noticing three more fall to well-placed arrows, courtesy of Virion's deadly accuracy.

"Shall we?" Chrom asked the Tactician. Drake nodded, his eyes blazing.

"Let's." With a threatening cry that would have made the greatest of Barbarians proud, the Prince and his Tactician charged onward into the fray.

Back at the forest entrance, a woman of about twenty-four years of age emerged from the foliage, picking leaves out of her dark green, gold-bordered Mage robes and light auburn hair. She mumbled under her breath as she dusted her dull white trousers off, sending puffs of dust the same color as her boots into the air. Her maroon-red eyes flicked about in irritation, before settling on a nearby bush, in which a large, wide-brimmed witch's hat was half buried.

"I knew that attempting to manipulate a Wind incantation as a means of rendezvousing with the rest of the expedition was a horrendous idea," she muttered as she withdrew her hat from the brush, plucking out the twigs that were embedded in it before placing it on her head. Her red glasses slid down her nose as she did so, and she pushed them back up to the bridge of her nose. "Confounded ocular enhancers...I will have to concoct a method to prevent them from interacting with gravity." She looked around, her face having a look of confusion on it.

"Strange...I am fairly certain that the information given to me about the expedition's whereabouts was valid, yet they are not present." She shrugged her shoulders, before walking down the path. "It does not matter. If I follow this pathway, we will eventually convene with each other..." Suddenly, a shimmering gleam from the left caught her attention, and she paused in her movement. Her curiosity piqued, she walked closer to the gleam, and found it to be an Iron Axe-one that had seen better days, if the slightly worn head was any indicator.

"Ah, it appears that someone has lost a weapon...Perhaps it fell from the caravan, and no one noticed its disappearance." She grabbed the axe's handle, and walked away, planning to take it with her. "I believe that I will return this to its rightful-!" The Mage woman's arm was suddenly jerked back, and as she fell onto the ground, she looked back and saw that the axe had barely moved a millimeter from its original position.

"Ignorant weapon of iron and evergreen," she growled as she stood up and took the handle in both hands, "You will come along with me, or I will be forced to incinerate you!" The woman started to walk backwards, dragging the axe with her, slowly and arduously.

After five miles of arduous backpedaling, the woman saw what appeared to be a caravan ahead, as well as two figures-a man and a woman-nearby. Soon, she could hear the man's voice, and she knew immediately who it was.

Vaike, she thought irritably.

"Come on, Teach, think!" Vaike said as he rapped his knuckles against his head, trying to jog his memory. "Where'd ya

last have your axe?" He shook his head, his memory failing him again. He was about ready to give up, when he heard a woman's voice from his left.

"I was wondering what ignoramus would so carelessly mislay their weapon...Now I know." He turned and saw the woman carrying his axe along the ground, and a huge grin came to his face.

"Miriell!" he exclaimed, causing Sumia to look out from the caravan and wave to the Mage. Miriel came up to Vaike and forced the axe into his hands, before collapsing against the caravan, exhausted from her trek.

"Next time...You lose your...axe, Vaike...I will be forced...To permanently affixate...It to your...hands." Her panting caused Sumia to give her a waterskin, which Miriel took with much gratitude.

"Yes! Now Teach can go and give those Risen what for!" Before he could charge down the hill, Sumia grabbed ahold of his arm, and shook her head.

"No, Vaike," she said, her usual, timid voice replaced by one of seriousness, "Remember what Drake said? You have the most important job, and that's protecting me." Vaike stared at Sumia as if she were a whole different person, before nodding.

"Oh yeah, right." Miriel stood up then, and walked over to the hill's crest, viewing the battlefield below.

"So the others are down there, fighting against the new 'Risen' threat?" She asked no one in particular. She drew forth a light green Tome from her robes, before flicking it open to a page in the middle. "Perfect. Then I'll grant them some assistance with my magical abilities." She started muttering under her breath, and soon, runes formed around her, before flashing green and vanishing.

"Elwind!" Miriel cried out, and thrust her free hand forward. As she did so, small, curved wind blades shot towards the field, cutting some of the Risen in half. Smiling at the results, Miriel continued the onslaught.

Down on the field, Drake and Chrom saw the wind blades cut through five Risen near them, dwindling their numbers down to about eleven, including the three that Frederick had killed in his initial charge and the two slain by Chrom and Drake. The Tactician had to admit, these Risen were a lot stronger than last time.

"Well," Chrom said, looking up to the hill, "Seems like Miriel finally caught up to us." Drake had no idea who Chrom was talking about, but decided to refrain from asking.

"Now's not the time to be distracted, Chrom!" Drake said, as he parried a sword strike that would've cleaved his head in two, before cutting the beast in half. Chrom nodded, kicking an axe-wielder away.

"You're right. We need to find the leader and kill him..." The two swordsmen heard a low, guttural growl from behind them, and turned.

"Chrom, I think we found him." Standing only a few meters away was a large, muscular Risen, although it wasn't like the one that they had seen last time. This one seemed more human than monster, but it still had piercing red eyes, and instead of claws, this one wielded a large, toothed axe that seemed to drip with a dark green ichor. As it stared at the Prince and the Tactician, its mouth moved, and it spoke.

"Kill...Prince...Kill...Prince..." it growled, its guttural voice making the statement all the more unnerving. As the Prince and the Tactician raised their blades in response to the threat, the Risen Chief unleashed a mighty roar that would have caused even the mightiest of warriors to shake with a visceral fear. The beast then charged at the pair, bringing its axe down swiftly. Drake jumped away from the attack, while Chrom sidestepped around the beast, and slashed at its unprotected back, wounding it. The beast screamed in agony, yet it did not fall, even as Chrom dealt two strong blows to its shoulder and hip. The Risen took a swing at Chrom, forcing him to block with Falchion.

The strike was so strong, however, that it sent the sacred blade flying out of Chrom's hands and into the body of a smaller Risen about ten meters away. Drake rushed at the beast, stabbing it through the wound on its shoulder. He heard a cracking noise coming from the area, and he knew that the bone within was shattered. The Risen Chief turned at him, its eyes dimmer than before, yet still intimidating.

"Kill...Prince...Kill...Chosen...One..." the beast growled, before swinging its axe one-handed at the Tactician, only for him to duck and roll underneath the attack, and slash at the beast's hamstrings, and then pierce its heart. The monster stood still for a few moments, before it fell, its axe falling just out of its reach.

"Kill...Prince...Kill..." the beast groaned as the light vanished from its eyes and it dissipated into a cloud of purple mist.

"Am I the only one who thinks that it's creepy when they do that?" Drake asked no one in particular. Chrom came rushing back over, having gone to retrieve Falchion, and the two watched as the last of the Risen fell now that they were leaderless.

So the Risen seem to be stronger when they have someone leading them, Drake thought. That's good to know...

"Good riddance," Chrom said, breaking Drake's thought process. "At least this group won't harm anyone else." The Tactician nodded, and shot a small bolt of Thunder into the air, signaling for the Shepherds to reconvene.

As the group gathered in the field, Vaike saw the deadly-looking axe, and picked it up out of curiosity. "Well, look at that!" he said, his eyes lit up like a child on Christmas Day, "Now this is an axe!"

"Vaike, put that down!" Drake yelled at the Fighter. "That's a Risen weapon; we don't know what it's come into contact with!" Vaike waved him off.

"Doesn't seem that dangerous to me. 'Sides, my old axe is in pretty bad shape, so I need a replacement, an' this one fits the bill just right!" Drake was about to argue that the whole thing was covered in a potentially deadly toxin, when he saw that the axe was no longer coated in ichor, but rather a fluid that looked akin to honey.

Odd... he thought, I was certain it had ichor on it. The coating must change with the wielder.

"Fascinating... This calls for experimentation." Drake's thoughts were broken as he saw a woman—he assumed that this was the 'Mirielle' Chrom had mentioned—walk up and examine the axe. Dabbing a finger into the honey-like substance, Mirielle tasted it, oblivious to the potential danger it may hold. "Amazing... It's sweet, just like sugar. I wonder..."

Before anyone could object, Mirielle drew a red Tome from her robes, and cast a spell from the beginning of it. As the runes circled around her, the intricate shapes flashing red in a mysterious rhythm, a small flame formed in her free hand. Lifting the flame up to the axe, everyone watched as the substance ignited, surrounding the weapon in flames.

"Ah yes, just as I had predicted. It seems we've discovered one of the Elemental Regalia: the blazing axe known as 'Firebleeder'." Drake approached the woman, his face quizzical.

"Would you happen to be Mirielle?" She nodded.

"Yes, that would be my name. And am I right to assume that you are Drake, our new strategist whom Sully speaks so highly of?" The Tactician nodded in affirmation.

"Yes, it's a pleasure to meet you."

"Perfect!" Mirielle said, clapping her hands together. "I am looking forward to cooperating alongside you so that we may create flawless battle stratagems." Mirielle then walked back towards the caravan, completely oblivious to Drake's stare. He then turned to Vaike, who had sheathed his axe away and had discovered that the flames disperse naturally.

"Does she always use such large words when she speaks?" The Tactician asked Vaike. The Fighter nodded. Drake groaned inwardly. "How is it that anyone can understand her?"

"Alright, Sumia, Virion, Mirielle, Lissa, take to the caravan and rest up. Everyone else, let's move!" Shouts of affirmation echoed throughout the group, and they were moving on within a minute, continuing the march to Regna Ferox.

The group made it about halfway to the Longfort before the sky grew too dark for them to continue marching. After setting up camp and having dinner (no bear this time, to Lissa's relief), the Shepherds headed for their bedrolls, with Drake taking first watch. As the Tactician stared up at the stars, he let his mind wander.

Well, he thought, Today's been hectic—not that I have anything to compare today to. Meeting new faces, finding an apparently legendary weapon, encountering more of those monsters... He stopped for a moment, thinking back to what the Risen Chief had said. Kill the Chosen One? I wonder who that could be. Ugh, so many questions without answers...

"Hey, Drake?" Sumia's voice cut through his mind as he turned and saw the young brunette walking over towards him, something obviously bugging her. "Do you mind if I..." The Tactician nodded, patting the log he was sitting on.

"Sure, Sumia." She nodded her thanks, and sat down. The two Shepherds stared at the stars for a few minutes, before Sumia broke the silence.

"Drake, do you think you could teach me how to fight?" The question caught Drake off guard, and he struggled with an

answer for a few moments, before he came up with a question.

"What made you decide this so suddenly?" Sumia didn't answer for a few moments, and Drake was worried he had offended her. Before he could apologize to her, she started to cry.

"I...I just..." she stuttered, before curling herself into a ball. "I just don't want to be considered deadweight...I want to protect what matters to me...But I'm clumsy, everyone knows that! If I ask anyone else, they'll most likely refuse because my clumsiness could get someone hurt, or worse! I...I don't know what to do..." Drake looked at her in disbelief; how could she think she was nothing but deadweight? He stood up, and positioned himself in front of her, on her level. He placed his hands on her heaving shoulders, and spoke to her in a gentle, yet authoritative, manner.

"Sumia, look at me." The brunette moved her head so that only her tear-filled eyes could be seen over her arms. "Do you honestly believe that you're deadweight? Because I sure as hell can say otherwise." She stared at him, not believing what she was hearing. "If you really were deadweight, the would Chrom have allowed you to come along? Probably not. Yet the fact that he did shows that you are nowhere near to being called 'deadweight'.

"I can see it in your eyes, Sumia. You have great potential; it just needs to be unlocked. We just need to know what you excel in, and condition it until you become a great Shepherd. Am I making myself clear to you?" She nodded, and sniffed lightly, before pulling Drake into an embrace, one which he returned.

"Thank...Thank you..." she whispered, her voice practically emanating gratitude and joy. The Tactician nodded, and released her.

"Get some rest, we leave first thing in the morning."

DAMN IT TO THE NINE HELLS, DRAKE! HOW COULD I BE SO INSENSITIVE?!

I am truly, truly sorry about the very large delay between chapters, folks. But this chapter just gave me so much trouble when it came to writing it, and school wasn't helping either. Most of the chapter, from the appearance of the Risen to the end, was all written over Thanksgiving weekend, so if it seems rushed at times, that's why (I really wanted to get this out before December). I will try my damned hardest to have the next chapter have less of a wait time behind it. Now, onto small facts about the chapter.

First, 'Firebleeder' and the Elemental Regalia. I wanted to add in at least a few weapons with elemental powers, and this is the first of four of said weapons (the other three coming much later). Anyone who objects will be ignored... And if anyone wants to know what Firebleeder looks like, just search for "Alatreon Weapons" in Bing Images, and it should be the fourth picture on the topmost row (Monster Hunter references FTW!).

Second, yes, the opening scene is my version of the Rank C Support Conversation between Lissa and the Avatar.

Third, Miriel was a very hard character to write, but SO MUCH FUN once I got it down! But, please tell me: did I use too many big words, or is she fine?

Fourth is a clarification about reviews. I appreciate them, but PLEASE DO NOT SPOIL ANYTHING ABOUT THE STORY OF Fire Emblem: Awakening, be it characters or events. It's just common courtesy.

Fifth, for those of you who are inevitably going to ask: yes, the Pair Up system isn't introduced until the third chapter in the game. But I already made a plan for that particular chapter, and it'll be a really short section of a larger chapter.

Finally, yes, Virion is using a recurve bow here. According to my research, a recurve bow has an effective range of about forty-five meters, and was more usable in brush and forest terrain than crossbows, longbows, and reflex bows (which were more suited for horseback). If I got any of that incorrect, please feel free to let me know.

Next time, we'll delve into the ending of Chapter Two, brush over Chapter Three with a segment that shows how epic Drake is when he's pissed, and start Chapter Four (hopefully). Until next time, this is the Servant of Grima, signing out.

Miriel: "I do believe it would be most prosperous if you fellow readers left critiques, favorites, and follows for this grand saga that the Servant of Grima is conjuring from the depths of his subconscious."

Chapter 6: Chapter 6

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Note: Welcome back, everyone! It's the Servant of Grima, back with yet another addition to the Fell Dragon Chronicles! Last time, we charged through the battle on the Northroad, and were introduced to Stahl and Miriel. Now... Well, you'll have to read and find out, now won't you?

Anyways, on with the Chapter!

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Chapter Five

As the light of dawn rose over the trees, shining onto the Shepherd's camp, Drake woke to the sounds of beating wings outside his tent. Slipping his cloak over his clothes, the Tactician exited his lodging, and approached the dead campfire, where his gaze fell upon a beautiful mare with wings as white as snow, chewing on the grass about twenty feet away from the eastern side of the camp.

"A Pegasus..." Drake whispered to himself, his mind racing with all of the tactical advantages and disadvantages of having a Pegasus Rider in a battle. *Okay, think Drake... Pegasus Riders are air units, so they would have a lot of speed. That would make them ideal for transport or hit-and-run tactics. However, they're highly weak to Wind magic-despite having good magical resistance-and Archers would probably make a pincushion out of one. Even so, having one would definitely make the Shepherds more diverse, and it also opens up more options for strategy.*

"The only problem is figuring out who should become one..." A thought popped into Drake's head at that moment, causing him to grin widely. "Sumia!" he said excitedly; she could be the group's Pegasus Knight. The Pegasus stopped eating for a few moments to stare at the crazy human talking to himself, before returning to her morning snack.

A pained yelp caused Drake to turn, where he saw Sumia lying flat on the ground, having tripped over nothing again. "Owww..." she moaned, although it was muffled by the fact that she was speaking into the ground.

"Those boots again, Sumia?" Drake asked, extending a hand to the fallen girl. She raised her head slightly, and nodded, taking the hand in the process. As Drake pulled her up, he turned his head just in time to watch the Pegasus fly off to the northwest. "Damn, it's getting away..."

"What is?" Sumia asked, brushing some dirt off of her armor. Drake contemplated telling Sumia about his plan, but decided to settle on giving her a half-truth, in case she didn't want to be a Pegasus Knight.

"A Pegasus... I wanted to tame her in the hopes of adding a Pegasus Knight to the Shepherds someday." Sumia's eyes brightened drastically at the mention of 'Pegasus Knight'-something that Drake easily caught, confirming his decision. "I'll be damned if I'm letting her get away!" he said as he rushed out of the camp after the flying equine, before returning in a rush. "Sumia, grab a weapon and let's go!"

Sumia grabbed a Bronze Lance from the caravan, which rested about ten feet away from the fire, and the two rushed after the Pegasus, hoping to find it amongst the clouds. After about half an hour of tracking the winged mare, however, they lost all traces of her.

"Damn!" Drake cursed loudly, his voice echoing across the plains and into the nearby trees. "She got away... Some tracker I am." Sumia shook her head slightly.

"It's not your fault, Drake," she told the Tactician. "Wild Pegasi are very skittish, and for good reason: it's very hard to survive in the wild, so they have to be cautious about everything that's unfamiliar to them." She smiled brightly. "Still, it was nice for you to think about the future of the Shepherds." A sharp, pained scream suddenly pierced the calm serenity of the plains, and the Pegasus burst through the trees, blood falling from her left front leg. Not even five seconds later, three of the same Risen that nearly killed Drake came after the wounded mare, their red eyes glowing.

Damn, more Risen, Drake thought as he drew his sword and studied his opponents. While these monstrosities were of the same build as that one beast the first night, they were of smaller stature, and their skin was of a dull purple-gray color, instead of the bright desert yellow that the previous one had.

"Well, Sumia, you wanted to learn how to fight? Here's your chance." Sumia's eyes seemed to glow fearfully for a moment, before she composed herself, and drew her lance. The three Risen circled around the two Shepherds, with two

facing Drake, and the third in front of Sumia. "Sumia, you try to kill that one. I'll handle these two. If you need help, just call for it, okay?" The brunette nodded, and she dodged to the left as her foe slashed at her with its claws.

Drake dashed forward, catching his Risen foes off guard. His blade pierced through one of the monstrosity's abdomen, leaving a decent-sized gash in the beast. The unwounded one tried to take advantage of Drake's momentary distraction, but the Tactician easily saw it coming, and danced around the monster's claws, watching in grim satisfaction as the beast tore through its ally's torso.

As the nearly dead Risen recovered from the friendly fire, Drake saw into the beast's body, and noted that there was nothing inside it, save for a black core which he assumed was the Risen's 'heart'. Too late, he noticed the other one's claws striking down at him, and he tried to dodge, but the claws still cut into his right arm, though not nearly as bad as if he had just stood there. Drake counterattacked, sending the beast reeling with its arm nearly being cleaved off, and inspected the wound.

Three shallow gashes ran down the length of his upper arm, a small amount of blood escaping from the wounds. It wasn't life-threatening, but it still hurt like hell. Even worse, his cloak's arm was pretty much ruined, until he could find a tailor to fix the cuts. *Damn it*, he thought. *Who know how much it'll cost to fix this...* Drake spared a glance over to Sumia, and saw her parry her Risen's claws, before stabbing it, adding another wound to its hide, which had already been marred countless times in the past few minutes.

It's good to see her handling things very well...Perhaps she doesn't need as much help as she said she needed. Drake returned his focus to his fight, and just in time, too: both Risen had recovered, and were charging at him in a desperate attempt to kill him. Drake smirked, and sidestepped the charge, before stabbing the wounded Risen through its 'heart'. After a moment's pause, he spun around in a circle, cutting through both Risen at once. The two monstrosities fell to the ground, and vanished in a black mist.

Turning, he watched Sumia trip the last Risen with her lance, before impaling it with the weapon, completely shattering it within the beast's body. It struggled painfully, an unearthly howl clawing its way out from its mouth, before the light vanished from its eyes, and it died, vanishing alongside its brethren.

Drake walked up to Sumia, nodding as he walked. "That was impressive, Sumia," he told the brunette. She smiled brightly, blushing all the while. The sound of rustling foliage caught the two Shepherds' attention, and Drake raised his blade to defend Sumia and himself from another aggressor.

However, what emerged wasn't a Risen or a bandit, but rather it was a young man, about twenty-two years old. He had dark brown hair and fair skin, but Drake couldn't tell what color his eyes were, since they seemed to be closed. Drake also noted that the man towered over both him and Sumia, meaning he was at least an entire foot taller than the Tactician. The most striking feature of him was his armor: Drake could've sworn he'd seen a set of silver Knight armor with gold bands somewhere before.

"Uh, sorry," the Knight said, his voice slightly deep, yet quiet, though not as quiet as Sumia's when she got nervous. "I didn't happen to scare either of you, did I?" Sumia recovered quickly from the shock, and shook her head.

"Y-you kind of did, Kellam," she said. "But it wasn't your fault! We thought you might've been another Risen, o-or a bandit, o-or something!" Kellam chuckled softly: he was used to this type of reaction, seeing as how many people tended to never notice him, for some reason or another.

"Anyways," she continued, turning to Drake, "Drake, this is Kellam. He's another member of the Shepherds, and the resident Knight of our group. Kellam, this is Drake, our new Tactician." Drake approached the tall Knight, and shook his gauntleted hand.

"It's a pleasure to have you on board, Kellam," the Tactician stated as the young Knight returned the gesture. The three Shepherds then turned towards the Pegasus, who was standing on shaking legs not too far off in the distance. Sumia set what remained of her Lance on the ground, and slowly approached the wounded animal.

"Sumia, be careful!" Drake warned the brunette. "That Pegasus is hurt and scared; we don't know how she'll react!" Sumia turned back to the Tactician, and gave him a confident smirk.

"Don't worry," she said, soft enough not to spook the Pegasus, but loud enough to be heard. "I can handle this." The brunette slowly grew closer to the winged horse, and kept her pace slow and methodical throughout the approach, careful not to make any sudden movements or noises. She was almost at the mare's side when it noticed her, and the Pegasus reared up in a panicked state, kicking its legs out wildly. Sumia took a small pace back, out of the range of the mare's hooves, until the mare settled back on the ground, at which point she placed a hand on the mare's neck. The Pegasus almost jerked its head away from the touch, but, after a moment, she visibly calmed down, and allowed Sumia

to stroke her.

"Shh...Easy girl, it's okay now. I'm not going to hurt you, I promise." Drake stood there, wide-eyed and amazed at how expertly the young woman had handled the situation. *Yep*, he thought to himself, *she's the perfect choice for the role of Pegasus Knight*. He then noticed Sumia waving him over, so he and Kellam approached, the latter carrying Sumia's ruined lance in his hands.

"I've checked her wound," she quickly explained. "Luckily, it's not too deep, and nothing that some salve can't fix back at camp." Drake nodded, and the three of them proceeded to return to the camp. Drake noticed that the Pegasus seemed to be willingly following Sumia, despite the fact that she only had a flat hand on its neck to guide her.

"That Pegasus seems to have taken a liking to you, Sumia," Drake said, to which Sumia nodded. "I'm also quite impressed with how well you handled that situation."

"I have a way with animals, I suppose," the brunette responded, blushing slightly at the praise she was receiving. Drake shook his head, not believing that she thought of her abilities as 'a way' instead of what they really were: a gift.

"A way? Sumia, this is a gift!" Sumia's cheeks grew even more red than they had before. At that moment, the quartet of Shepherds and winged mare entered camp, and Drake was surprised that no one else was awake yet. Kellam disappeared into the caravan, probably to return the broken lance and grab some salve for the Pegasus. Sumia and Drake stayed by the campfire, neither of them noticing the mare walking towards Chrom's tent. "This is what I was talking about last night: finding what you excel in, and conditioning it until you become a great Shepherd." He quickly turned to Sumia, and grasped her shoulders lightly. "I told you this morning that I wanted to add a Pegasus Knight to our ranks. Well, I think I found the perfect candidate for the role." At this point, Sumia was smiling out of excitement and shock. "Sumia, what would you say to becoming the group's first Pegasus Knight?"

The brunette stood there for a few seconds, before nearly tackling the Tactician to the ground in a huge bear hug. "Yes!" she practically screamed in joy. "Yes! Yes! Yes! Thank you Drake, thank you!" The brunette released Drake from the crushing grip at that moment, and then embraced him lightly. "Thank you..." she said into his shoulder.

"BWARGH!" A scream came from Chrom's tent, causing the two Shepherds to quickly release their embrace. Drake drew his sword, and prepared to attack the Prince's assailant...

...Until he saw the Pegasus sticking its head into Chrom's tent. A few moments later, Chrom slowly walked out of the tent, and Drake and Sumia couldn't help but laugh: the Pegasus had apparently given Chrom a morning wake-up call, resulting in the Prince's face being soaked with horse saliva.

"Alright," Chrom groaned, pinching his temple in irritation before jabbing a finger at Drake and Sumia. "Which one of you two is responsible for the Pegasus in my tent?" The two Shepherds stopped laughing, and nervously glanced at each other. Eventually, Drake sighed.

"It's a long story, Chrom," he said, before gesturing towards the logs. The three of them sat down, and Drake explained the events that had occurred over the past hour to Drake, including Sumia's battle against the Risen, and her expert handling of the Pegasus. As Drake ended his explanation, the Prince remained silent for a moment, before turning to Sumia, and smiled brightly.

"Not ready for combat just yet?" Isn't that what you said, Sumia?" Chrom asked rhetorically. Sumia's face grew a shade of red that Drake thought was almost inhuman, and turned her gaze away from the Prince. Chrom sighed, and turned his attention to Drake. "How soon can she be ready to move out?"

"No clue," the Tactician answered honestly. "That's something you'll have to ask our new Pegasus Knight." Sumia's blush all but vanished at that point, and she grew serious, answering swiftly.

"It should be a couple of hours, Captain. The wound isn't too deep, but the salve will need time to work. I might need to stay back with her and make sure she's alright." Chrom contemplated the information Sumia gave him for a moment, then nodded his head.

"Alright, but I'd feel better if one of us stayed behind with you." Sumia nodded at this, and the three Shepherds adjourned their impromptu meeting to tend to the Pegasus, and get Drake's arm patched up.

After informing the rest of the Shepherds of the morning's events, Stahl eventually volunteered to stay behind and keep an eye on Sumia. Once Drake made sure they knew which direction to go in once the Pegasus was healed, the Shepherds headed out. They made good time, reaching their first snow-covered trees in a little under two hours. As they

continued on, snow started to cover more and more of the ground, until there was barely any green left to be seen. Drake also noted that the temperature dropped quite a bit over a short amount of time, and quickly suggested that the others don some cloaks.

Much to his surprise, almost everyone, even the distrusting Frederick, quickly followed his orders. The only one who adamantly refused was Vaike, who blatantly stated that his own manliness was enough to keep the cold at bay, despite the fact that he was obviously shivering. Sully had to practically wrestle the Fighter to the ground just to get him to submit to at least wearing a cloak, although he remained adamant about not closing it. As they waited for Vaike to get more appropriate attire equipped, Drake thought he saw a familiar, blue-clad figure moving through the trees at a fairly fast pace, although he quickly chalked it up to his imagination.

Another half hour was spent trudging through the snow until they came out of the dead forest, and appeared about two hundred feet away from the largest building Drake had ever seen. He quickly looked to the left, then to the right; as far as he could tell, the large stone structure in front of him stretched across the land endlessly.

"Whoa," he whistled softly. "That's...one big wall." Chrom nodded solemnly.

"That's the Longfort," Frederick explained. "It stretches from coast to coast, and marks the border between Regna Ferox and Yisse. The fort is actually much older than it appears-in fact, it's all that remains of a time, long ago, when the Feroxi and the Yissians weren't very neighborly." Drake shuddered involuntarily; whether from the cold or from fear, he couldn't be certain.

"Will they let us pass?"

"As soon as I let them know who I am," Chrom answered, before nodding his head towards the fort. The Shepherds moved closer to the fort, but as they got closer, a feeling of dread grew within the Tactician. Fifty feet from the fort, he spotted what was causing the feeling of fear.

"Uh, Chrom?" he asked the Prince nervously. "Why are there Archers on the wall, and why are they aiming at us?" Chrom looked back at the Tactician, then back at the wall, a look of concern flashing across his face. He held up his hand, signaling for the others to stop, before carefully walking up alone. Despite knowing Chrom could probably handle this, Drake couldn't shake the fear that something was going to go terribly wrong. Quietly, he signaled for the others to be ready for anything.

Chrom stopped about twenty feet away from the wall, and looked up. He could see ten Archers, each with their arrows trained on to him. He hadn't the slightest idea as to what could possibly warrant such hostility, but he knew that he had to be careful: one wrong move could be potentially dangerous. Composing himself, he called up to the Archers. "I am Prince Chrom of Yisse! I come on behalf of my sister, Exalt Emmeryn, to discuss the possibility of an alliance between her and the Khan of Regna Ferox! Who among you is the commander of the Longfort?"

One of the Archers backed away from the wall, and out of Chrom's sight for a few moments, before returning to his post and retraining his arrow onto the Prince. After a few tense seconds, a woman of around twenty-seven years appeared between the two centermost Archers. Chrom saw that she had short-shorn, straw colored hair, as well as very harsh facial features, ones obviously born from a lifetime of cold weather, harsh climates, and frequent combat. Her armor, obviously that of a Knight, was almost similar to Kellam's, except it was a dark jade color, very plain, and very weathered.

"My name is Raimi," the woman spoke to Chrom with a thick accent. "I am the commander of the Longfort. And I care not for your reasons for being here. My only interest is keeping you out of Regna Ferox, brigand!" Chrom nearly backpedaled onto his hindquarters at that statement: how dare this woman mistake him for a common thug!

"Brigand?!" he exclaimed in shock. "I am no brigand! I am the Prince of Yisse, and I-!"

"Pah!" Raimi spat out, cutting off Chrom almost immediately. "I've seen twenty so-called 'Prince Chroms' in the past month; you're not even the most convincing one I've seen this week!" She paused for a moment, before continuing. "I'll give you one chance, brigand: turn back now, and we will cause you no harm. Resist, and we will kill you." The Prince lost his patience at that moment, and drew Falchion from its sheath.

"Why the hell won't you listen, woman!?" Chrom growled, jabbing the sword in Raimi's direction. "I am not a brigand; I am Prince Chrom of Yisse!" The Knight scoffed, and raised her fist upwards.

"Right, and I'm the Queen of Archanea. I gave you a chance, brigand, and you squandered it. Now you've forced me to play my hand." Raimi threw her fist down as she turned away from the wall and walked away. "ARCHERS, FIRE!"

As the Archers let their arrows fly, time seemed to slow down, and Drake became aware of everything at once: he saw

Chrom start to turn in a futile attempt to escape certain death. He saw Frederick galloping towards Chrom in a desperate bid to shield his charge from the projectiles, Virion nocking two arrows and aiming for Raimi's retreating figure, Sully and Vaike both defiantly roaring in unison as they charged forward, hoping to help Frederick, and Lissa screaming her brother's name in pure terror. He saw Miriel trying to come up with a spell on the fly in the hopes of forcing the arrows to miss their target. He saw Stahl charging towards the group, and-

Wait, Drake thought to himself. *Isn't Stahl supposed to be with Sumia?* A realization hit him at that moment, and in the next, he was hit with a powerful gust of wind as a Pegasus sped over him.

Sumia sped past Vaike, then Sully, and finally Frederick in the span of two seconds, before reaching Chrom, and, with what must have been a tremendous amount of force on her arm, grabbed the Prince's shoulder, and threw him onto the Pegasus, before dashing back into the skies, somehow avoiding every single arrow that was launched.

Chrom took a moment to marvel at his near escape, before turning towards his savior. "Sumia..." he said in a hushed voice, "Thanks." The young Pegasus Knight nodded quickly.

"Better hold on tight, Captain," she told him in an authoritative tone of voice that he thought would never come from Sumia, of all people. "This could get a little bumpy." He quickly obliged, wrapping an arm around her waist while holding Falchion in the other, and praying to Naga herself that Sumia couldn't see him blushing.

What he didn't know, however, was that Sumia was also hoping that he couldn't see *her* blushing.

As Raimi walked away from the wall, she smirked to herself. *That's another group of Plegian impersonators eliminated*, she thought to herself. However, she paused after a few moments, as a thought struck her. *Why does it feel like I've made a grievous error? There was something about that 'Chrom' that seemed different than all the others...* Her musings were broken, however, when one of the Archers called out to her in a panic.

"Lady Raimi!" the Archer shouted. "The brigand's escaped!" Raimi, without a moment's pause, dashed back over to the edge, and saw a Pegasus Knight swooping away with the brigand in tow.

"Damn it!" she screamed into the wind. Fuming, she called out to one of the Archers. "Get the guard mobilized-I want these bastards dead!" The Archer nodded, and disappeared into the fort for a few moments, before returning. He passed Raimi a note, which she grabbed and hastily read. "Already mobilized?" she muttered to herself, before whistling softly. "Damn, that was fast."

She looked out to the field before her, where she saw the Pegasus Knight and the brigand Chrom reuniting with the other brigands. Immediately afterwards, she stumbled back, and saw two arrows trapped in her shoulder. Luckily, they didn't penetrate the skin: the armor saw to that. "Fine then," she said to herself breaking the arrow shafts with one hand, "Let's settle this the Feroxi way." She then raised her hand, and swung it down towards the field.

"FEROXI GUARD, MOVE OUT!"

As soon as the Feroxi arrows hit the ground where Chrom had been standing only moments before, time returned to its normal speed, and everything happened at once. Virion released his arrows perfectly, and they sailed towards the Longfort. Frederick and Sully brought their mounts to a graceful halt, while Vaike skidded to a stop, spinning to watch what was going on. Lissa was crying tears of relief and joy, and Miriel's Wind Tome fell from her hands, although she quickly picked it up, hoping no one noticed.

Stahl finally reached the group, and asked what had happened. Drake gave him a quick rundown, then thanked him and Sumia for getting to their location at just the right time.

Sumia landed gracefully by Drake's side, and the Tactician saw that Chrom's arm was around the brunette's waist, and both of them were blushing profusely. Geez, he thought to himself, *they're just dancing around the mutual attraction. It's a wonder that neither of them has tried to tell the other: they're perfect for one another.*

His thoughts were broken as he heard the fort's commander shout for the Feroxi guard to mobilize, and quickly commanded the others to form up. "Virion, Miriel, you two stay here and keep Lissa safe! Frederick and Vaike, you two partner up and get in there when I give the signal! Sully, you'll follow them alongside Kellam, got it?" The red-armored Cavalier nodded, as did the Knight behind her. "Sumia, you keep Chrom safe, alright?" More nods from the Pegasus Knight and the Prince. "Stahl, it's you and me this time. Get me into the action as soon as I say so." Stahl nodded, before reaching down and helping Drake get onto his horse behind him.

By this point, around thirty-three Feroxi warriors had emerged from the fort. Drake took a quick mental note: eleven Barbarians with axes, eleven Mercenaries with swords, and eleven lance users: six Knights and five Soldiers. *No Mages: good, that's one less problem Kellam and Sumia will have to worry about.* Composing himself, he called out to his allies.

"Shepherds! Charge!" Frederick and Vaike charged forth, with Firebleeder igniting almost as soon as the Fighter drew it. Sully charged forward a few seconds after them, with Kellam doing his best to keep up. At the same time, Sumia took to the skies with Chrom, being careful to stay out of the range of the Archers. With a nod from the Tactician, Stahl charged ahead, and the battle began.

Sully was the first one into the fight, and was immediately surrounded by five of the Feroxi Mercenaries. Glaring, she swung her lance around, knocking two of the slower ones on their derrières almost instantly, while the rest shifted away from the tomboy Cavalier and her steed Zandra. One of the three who remained standing tried his luck at throwing her off the horse, but was promptly shoved back with a well-placed boot to the face. "Hands off the merchandise, pal!" she shouted as he fell to the ground, unconscious and with a bleeding nose. The remaining two looked to each other, then at their fallen comrade, before turning tail and heading back into the thick of battle.

"Hah! That ought to teach ya! So long, chumps!" Hearing grunts behind her, she quickly turned and saw the two Mercenaries she had knocked away rise to their feet and charge her. The Cavalier prepared to swing again, but, just as they got within striking distance, they were stopped by an invisible wall. Or rather, Sully noted irritably, Kellam stood in their way. With one fluid motion, the invisible Knight knocked the last two Mercenaries away with his Iron Lance, sending them sprawling onto the ground.

"Back off!" he cried, planting his lance into the ground. Sully growled irritably; she was handling herself just fine, then Kellam just *had* to show up from out of nowhere and steal the spotlight from her. In a split second, she readjusted her swing, and whapped Kellam on his head.

"God damn it, Kellam!" she yelled at him, "What the hell did ya do that for?" Kellam turned towards the tomboy, his right hand rubbing the spot where she had hit him.

"Well, Drake did say-!" he started to say, before Sully cut him off again.

"Well, knock it the hell off! I could've handled those chumps easily. I don't need some tiny man in a huge suit of armor watching over me, got it?"

"B-b-but..." Sully cut him off with a much fiercer glare than before.

"You think I need protection, is that it? You think I'm frail and weak, huh?"

"N-no, that's-!"

Sully planted her Lance on Kellam's chestplate, right above her heart. Despite knowing that his armor would prevent the Lance from skewering him, Kellam still was fearful for his life. "I'll say this once, and once only, tin man: don't ever pull that crap again! Got it?" The Knight nodded, and Sully pulled away from him, charging back into the fray. Kellam just stood there as the enemy kept ignoring him.

"B-but I like protecting people..." he said to himself. "Especially my friends..."

Across the battlefield, Frederick swung his Silver Lance at another Barbarian, knocking him to the ground, where he lay motionless, yet still breathing. He spared a few moments glancing around the field, taking count of the enemy's numbers. *Alright, the Great Knight thought to himself, so far, we've taken out three Barbarians, seven Mercenaries, a Soldier, and a Knight. That leaves thirty-two enemies: twenty-one members of the guard, the ten Archers, and their commander.* A whooping noise came from his left, and he spared a sideways glance to see Vaike taking on three Barbarians by himself.

"Come at me, I dare ya!" Vaike called out to the enemy. "Time fer Teach ta give ya'll a very painful lesson!" One of the Barbarians came at him, and Vaike swung Firebleeder into him, knocking the Barbarian back into his allies, and sending them sprawling. "Yeah! Class dismissed!"

Never mind, make that twenty-nine enemies to deal with. Frederick glanced back to the caravan, and saw three Mercenaries heading over there, hoping to ambush Miriel, Virion, and the Princess. "Not on my watch!" he growled, before charging that way. "Vaike!" he called to the Fighter, "Keep safe!" The Fighter nodded in response, before blocking an attack from the last remaining Mercenary.

Lissa watched from behind the caravan as Virion and Miriell kept aiming at the Archers on the wall, destroying their arrows as they released them. She was so focused on keeping them safe, she didn't see the Mercenaries sneaking up on her until Frederick shouted at her.

"Milady, be careful!" Turning, she saw the Great Knight beat down two Mercenaries with his lance, and one closing in on her. She screamed, retreating back from her position. Luckily, Miriell caught her scream, and used an Elwind spell to sweep the Mercenary's feet out from underneath him. As he rose to his feet, Lissa whacked him with her staff, knocking him out.

"Milady, are you unharmed?" Frederick asked the Princess once he reached her. She nodded, before noticing that the Great Knight had taken a sword to his face, resulting in a shallow gash over his left eye.

"You're injured Frederick!" she said to him. He reached up, and pressed his gauntlet on the cut, hissing softly.

"Tis but a scratch, milady. I'll be fine," he said, although Lissa wasn't convinced. She still used her staff to heal the Great Knight.

"Even a scratch can get infected, Frederick," she said with motherly concern. "Besides, who would protect Chrom if you were taken out of commission because of disease?" The Great Knight opened his mouth to respond, then promptly shut it. Realizing that she was right, he let her continue to tend to him.

"Stahl, to your left!" Drake called out as he blocked a Soldier's lance thrust with his sword.

"Got it," the Cavalier replied, using the flat of his blade to send another Soldier to the ground. After making sure the Soldier wasn't getting back up anytime soon, he quickly glanced around: he saw Chrom and Sumia staying in the air, away from the Archers, dive-bombing some unlucky saps every now and then. He also saw Sully and Vaikke handling themselves well. "You know, we make a great team." The Tactician laughed.

"Yeah, I know," he replied. After knocking the first Soldier out, he glanced towards the caravan, and saw three Mercenaries heading in that direction, swiftly followed by an enraged Frederick. "Stahl, Frederick's gone back to the caravan. I need you to help out Vaikke!"

"You sure?" the Cavalier asked. Drake nodded in response. "Alright. Can you handle things by yourself?"

"Of course," the Tactician responded, before quickly turning on his heel and casting an Arcwind spell underneath the three Knights who were trying to sneak up on them. The spell sent the three Feroxi Knights flying about five feet into the air, before they crash-landed on top of each other, and lay motionless except for the occasional pained moan. "See?" Stahl nodded, before galloping off towards Vaikke.

A few seconds later, a dull thud came from behind Drake, and he turned, seeing an Archer on the ground behind him, one of Virion's arrows stuck in his shoulder. *Damn it, Virion, I don't want you trying to kill them, I just want-!* As Drake was mentally scolding Virion and his very precise aim, he glanced up at the wall, then at the Archer, then back at the wall again. Almost instantly, a plan formed in his mind; it was a stupid plan, and it was very risky. But if he could pull it off...

Then I could nip the problem in the bud, he thought. Standing, he backed up ten feet from the wall, sheathed his sword, and quickly prepared an Arcwind spell in his right hand. He breathed in, then out, and then ran full sprint at the wall. "This is probably the stupidest thing I've ever done!" he shouted as he grew closer and closer to the wall. As soon as he got within two feet of the wall, he thrust his palms down...

...And released the spell directly below his feet.

A Feroxi Soldier just barely dodged a lance thrust from the red-armored Cavalier, and ran away, before ducking a swing from the half-naked Fighter with the flaming Axe. As soon as he rose to his feet, he just so happened to glance at the Longfort, and he couldn't believe what he saw.

"HOLY SHIT, THAT KID'S JUMPING THE WALL!" His exclamation rang throughout the field, and caused all conscious combatants to halt their fighting, and turn towards the Longfort. As each pair of eyes set their sight on the fort, everyone gasped in shock.

The Feroxi Guard couldn't believe what they were seeing.

Virion whistled softly, obviously impressed.

Lissa's mouth was wide open, and she pointed towards the wall.

Frederick shook his head in disbelief.

Kellam stood in place, amazed at what he was seeing.

"Hot damn," Sully muttered to herself.

Miriel's mouth was moving like a fish gasping for breath, trying to figure out how this was all happening.

Stahl and Vaike cheered like there was no tomorrow.

Sumia had to rub her eyes to make sure she wasn't dreaming.

And Chrom mouthed "No way." Even so, what he saw was no illusion.

Drake, the amnesiac Tactician, had used a Wind spell to propel himself up the Longfort. In short, he was flying.

It actually worked! Drake thought to himself as he flew up the wall. He looked back, and saw that all combat had stopped as all eyes were staring at him. In the distance, he could hear Stahl and Vaike cheering for him, and he smiled briefly, before returning his attention to the wall. Soon, he passed over the wall's lip, and was greeted with the shocked expressions of the nine remaining Archers and their commander.

Smirking to himself, he cried out "Elwind!" and released nine wind blades to knock the Archers away from the wall's edge, and then cast another Wind spell behind him to get himself onto the wall.

Raimi, despite her shock, recomposed herself quickly as the Archers were knocked out by the spell, and gripped her Steel Lance tightly. "I don't know how you managed to scale the Longfort, brigand," she growled, "But I'm not impressed. Now, you face me! I am Raimi, commander of the Longfort. Now, let this battle sound out the truth of your words!" She charged at Drake, her lance aimed for his heart.

Drake quickly sidestepped the charging Knight and drew his sword in the same instant, before slashing downwards and cutting *straight through* the lance's shaft. Before Raimi could react to the shock of losing her weapon, Drake cast a small Wind spell and tripped the Knight up, causing her to fall onto her back. As soon as she hit the ground, he planted the tip of his blade at her throat. Silence reigned after that; the only sounds were the blowing winds and the occasional pained moans from the unconscious Feroxi Guard members. Finally, after what felt like an eternity, Drake broke the silence with one word.

"Yield."

I say that the next chapter will have less of a wait time, and what do I go and do? Make you guys wait EIGHT MONTHS for the next one! I'm truly sorry, everyone!

I know this probably won't make up for my lateness, but this is my explanation: I had writer's block. Simple as that. I had the chapter all planned out and ready to go, I got the first 1500-ish words out, then I just...Lost it. I don't know what happened, but I just lost the will to write. Now, this doesn't mean I'm cancelling my stories: far from it. I'll try even harder to get the chapters out as soon as I can, and at the best quality I can. Quality over Quantity, right?

Anyways, I know people are going to complain about-slash-question some things, so I'll clear them up now:

First, Drake using Wind spells to fly. This was something that came to me in a dream. Plus, he was able to do so in his Smash Bros. reveal trailer. So I incorporated it into the story. And it won't be removed anytime soon.

Second, some people may be confused at what the goal of the Longfort battle was. Well, if you read the wording carefully, you'll see how I said that most of the Feroxi Guard were unconscious, not dead. Drake wanted to keep casualties at a minimum (preferably at zero), since chances are a country you're trying to form an alliance with won't take too kindly to you killing some of their warriors, even if they were the ones who started the fight.

Finally, I've had a couple of people complaining about my idea with the Elemental Regalia. Here's my response to those who have complained (not naming anyone): the Elemental Regalia are *STAYING*. End. Of. Story.

Also, I may or may not have revealed one of my pairings in this chapter (NOT Chrom+Sumia: that was revealed last chapter). Anyone who can figure it out will get an Internet cookie.

Next time, we head into Regna Ferox, and run into an old "friend". Until then, this is ServantofGrima, signing out!

Kellam: "It would be really nice if you readers could rate, review, favorite, and follow this story. That way, it won't be ignored. ...Unlike me."

Chapter 7: Chapter 7

Fire Emblem Awakening: Chronicles of the Fell Dragon War

Author's Notes: I'm back once again, everyone! Hopefully I didn't keep you guys waiting too long? Anyways, welcome to the sixth chapter of the Fell Dragon Chronicles! Before we begin, I just want to note one thing: This chapter, out of every chapter in the game, is the ONE that made me a fan of FE:A to begin with. This chapter got me interested in the story: it had me hanging on the edge of my seat, making me want more and more. In short, I LOVE Chapter 4: Two Falchions! So, this chapter might be slightly longer than previous ones, just so you know.

Now, with that out of the way, let me warn you of this: the Arena fight that occurs will be VASTLY different than how it's portrayed in the game. Now, let's get rolling!

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Chapter Six

Raimi stared at the blade against her throat, then her eyes wandered up to its wielder. The Feroxi Knight couldn't even begin to comprehend how this young man could've easily bested her in single combat. There was no way a mere brigand had the strength, skill, or speed to outmatch her. Unless...

Their claims were true, she realized at that moment. How foolish she was, mistaking the Prince of Ylisse and his guard for common thugs! She chuckled softly, before it became a full-blown laugh. Not just at her own hubris, but also at how well the man had fought. "Hah!" she said after the laughter had subsided. "Spoken like a true Feroxi!" She paused for a moment, allowing her face to return to a more serious mode, before continuing. "I yield, sir."

The young man removed the blade from Raimi's throat, before offering her a helping hand-one that she humbly took. "I'm glad we've come to an understanding, Raimi," he said. "My name's Drake." As the Knight stood, she turned her head towards the wall's edge, and called out to the field in her most authoritative voice.

"FEROXI GUARD, HOLD!"

Chrom and Sumia hovered over the Longfort, astounded by the spectacle they had just witnessed. They knew Drake was strong, but for him to singlehandedly take on the Longfort's commander, and win so easily? That was something neither of them had expected.

"Wow..." Sumia said in awe. "That was..." Chrom could only nod his head in agreement: there were no words that could describe what he was feeling right now.

"Where among you is Prince Chrom?" he heard Raimi call out to the battlefield. "I wish to speak with him." With a nod to Sumia, the Prince and the Pegasus Knight descended to the wall, landing in front of Raimi and Drake.

"I'm right here," he told the Feroxi woman, sliding down from the winged horse's back. "I hope we've come to an understanding?" The Knight nodded.

"Yes, we have. After all," she turned to the Tactician as she spoke, "Only royalty could hope to hire someone as talented as this young man here.

"I must apologize, however." She bowed before the Prince as she spoke. "Like I said, we have had problems with bandits posing as you for the past month. We had to take precautions." Chrom nodded, finally understanding the reason for the hostility.

"It's fine Raimi: I'm certain that Emm wouldn't pin any blame on you." The Knight stood, and nodded.

"Thank you, Prince Chrom. Please, allow me to escort you the rest of the way to the Coliseum." Without waiting for a response, Raimi walked back into the castle, presumably to open the gates and allow the Shepherds to pass. Chrom sent Sumia to gather the others, and lead them through the Longfort. Once she was gone, Chrom and Drake followed the Feroxi Knight into the fort.

Chrom opened his eyes, and blinked in confusion as he stared up at a brown-red ceiling, and not the tan canvas of his tent. *What the hell?* He thought to himself. He blindly reached to his hip for Falchion, but felt nothing but straw. As he sat

up, he noticed a large door directly across from him, and, situated all over the room, the other Shepherds, each lying on a makeshift straw bed, save for Frederick and Raimi, each of whom slept with their backs against the wall. *Wait, now I remember!*

Yesterday's events came rushing back to him, like a flood bursting through a dam. The group of Yissians and Raimi had set out from the Longfort after lunch, and had made good time until they ran into a blizzard that had formed out of nowhere. While blizzards were pretty common in Regna Ferox, they were mostly small and quick, usually never lasting for more than an hour or two. This one, however, was monstrous! The winds were strong enough to tear Miriel's hat to shreds if she hadn't kept it stored in the caravan, and the sky had been darkened by the sheer amount of snow that was being swept around them. It was a miracle that they had survived through the bitter cold storm.

If Drake and Raimi hadn't found this barn, I'm certain we all would've died out there. At that thought, the Prince took another glance around, and noticed that Drake was nowhere to be seen. *That's odd, where did he go?* He heard some grunts coming from outside, and decided to investigate. Moving as quietly as he could so as not to disturb the others, the Prince exited the barn to look for his Tactician.

He didn't have to look far, however. Outside their sanctuary, about ten feet away from the door, eight planks of wood stood in a twelve-foot circle, and in the center of the circle stood Drake. His hands crackled with lightning as he repeatedly cast Thunder spells at the boards, swiftly turning every few seconds to hit a different one. Chrom watched the Tactician practice for about ten minutes before approaching him.

"Drake, there you are!" The Tactician turned his head towards the Prince, and nodded in response, before firing an Elfir spell at his feet, causing a small explosion that knocked all the boards over at once. Panting from exhaustion, he turned back to the Prince.

"Sorry, Chrom," he apologized. "Did I wake you or the others?"

"No, not really," the Prince replied. "I just woke up about ten minutes ago." He looked at each of the boards, and whistled softly. "Man, you really did a number on these planks." Drake laughed, and scratched the back of his head.

"Yeah, I've been out here for some time. I'm trying to work on my magical capabilities; my swordsmanship is okay, but I feel like I'm falling behind when it comes to spellcasting." Chrom shook his head in disbelief.

"Falling behind? Are you kidding me? With the way you used those Wind spells to scale the Longfort, I'd say your spellcasting is fine where it is. Hell, even Miriel is impressed with your skill, and that's saying something." The two of them laughed for some time, before Chrom's eyes drifted back to the planks of wood. "You want me to help you set these back up?"

"Sure. Thanks, Chrom." They set to work placing the boards back into position. As they were working, a thought crossed Drake's mind, and it made him worry. "Can I ask you something, Chrom?" The Prince placed the board he was carrying into the ground and chuckled.

"Uh-oh. Should I be nervous?" Despite his joking tone, he knew what Drake had to say was probably important, and decided to be serious from that moment onward.

"When you found me in that field, collapsed and without memory, why did you take me in?" Drake's question caught the Prince off-guard: nobody had ever brought up Drake's amnesia after Sully had told the rest of the Shepherds about it. Hell, he was almost certain that everyone had forgotten that Drake even *had* amnesia to begin with. So to hear him bring up the topic was....surprising, to say the least.

"Well..." he said, deciding to answer truthfully, "Because you were collapsed and without memory?" Drake sighed sadly.

"That's it? Pity was your reason?" Chrom tilted his head in confusion.

"Isn't that enough of a reason?" The Tactician shook his head.

"Not for me, it isn't." He paused, his face growing grimmer by the second. "Did you never stop to consider that *maybe* my being there was some kind of ruse? Some kind of trap, or the setup for an ambush?" Chrom chuckled: had Drake forgotten what he told him that first night, when the Risen first appeared?

"Heh, that's what I have Frederick for." Drake still shook his head.

"But why didn't-!"

"Drake." Chrom's voice cut off the Tactician before he could finish his question. Drake looked the Prince in the eye, and

saw that he was really being serious this time, not joking around like he had been before. "Listen to me: if I see someone who's been hurt or is in need, then I'm going to help them. That's just who I am, and there's no changing that." Chrom then smiled wryly. "Or would you have preferred it if I had left you there, lying in the muck?" Drake laughed at the Prince's dry humor.

"No, of course not. I'm thankful for what you did; I truly am." Even so, he was still troubled by the Prince's response. "But it still scares me all the same. Chivalry and longevity don't often go hand-in-hand." Chrom actually snorted, trying to hold back a laugh.

"Ha! I wish I had a gold coin for every time I got this lecture." Drake shrugged.

"I can only offer advice, I'm afraid. You really should be more careful in the future." Chrom shook his head.

"I'm sorry, but no," he apologized. "If it happened again today, I'd do the exact same thing..."

"But-!" Chrom held up a hand, stopping Drake mid-retort.

"Peace, Drake. I've heard your counsel, and I know you mean well. But as I said, this is who I am. I can't change that, nor would I want to."

"I..." Drake said, before sighing. "I understand. If that's your decision, then so be it. Just...do try and be careful. For my peace of mind, if not your own?" The Prince nodded, and they shook hands.

"I will, my friend. I promise." They finished setting up the boards, and Chrom watched Drake practice for another hour, before they returned to the barn in order to rouse everyone. As they left, however, neither of them noticed a blue-clad figure watching them from the trees.

"...And so it begins..." Marth muttered to himself, before dashing off to the west.

It took the Shepherds another day to reach the center of Feroxi power: the ancient fortress known as the Coliseum. The Shepherds all stared at the massive stone amphitheater as they grew ever closer to it; not even Yisstol Castle was as big as the colossal edifice that stood before them. Drake noted that the place looked more like a fortress than a sporting arena, let alone a seat of power: the only visible way into the Coliseum, as far as he could tell, was a large gate set in the center of the towering, curved walls, and there were an innumerable amount of alcoves for Archers and Snipers to stand guard.

Raimi looked up proudly at the fortress; obviously the Coliseum was a great source of pride for the Feroxi people. "Welcome to the seat of Feroxi power, Prince Chrom," the Feroxi woman said to the Prince.

As they passed under the gates, Drake thought he saw a flash of blue out of the corner of his eye. When he turned to look, however, he saw nothing. "Must be my imagination..." he muttered to himself.

Their escort led the Shepherds into a large receiving hall; it wasn't as elegant as the one Grant had led them to in Yisstol, Drake noted, but it was still impressive. A large, blue carpet ran across the length of the room, and along the walls hung the pelts and skulls of many a ferocious beast. At the back of the room was a large throne, forged from stone and lined with furs, and on the wall above it hung the crest of Regna Ferox: a grey wolf and a brown bear rearing up at each other, locked in combat, while two swords crossed behind the animals.

Raimi summoned a couple of attendants, both of whom were dressed like the Soldiers at the Longfort, except with fur caps instead of helmets, and had them lead most of the Shepherds to a dining hall, where they could relax and wait for Chrom. Vaike was slightly dejected as he was separated from his rival, but perked up almost immediately at the mention of an 'all-you-can-eat buffet', and Drake heard him challenge Stahl to an eating contest.

"Prince Chrom, please wait here while I summon the Khan," Raimi stated, bowing slightly before leaving the hall through a door behind the throne, leaving the Prince alone with Frederick, Drake, and Lissa. Of course, Kellam was there too, standing just behind the Princess, but nobody noticed him, despite how much he shouted and waved his arms.

Chrom fidgeted with the hilt of Falchion as he waited for the Khan to appear: he was nervous, to be sure, more nervous than he had been when he had been appointed as the leader of the Shepherds.

"The Khan is away?" Drake asked the Prince. Chrom shrugged his shoulders, grateful for the distraction.

"Out training, I'd wager," he replied. Frederick nodded in agreement.

"Just like the rest of the nation, the Khans are said to prefer battle over politics. In fact, most of the politics here are settled by battle; Regna Ferox is a warrior nation, after all." Drake chuckled lightly, before crossing his arms behind his head and turning his back to the throne.

"A warrior ruler, huh?" he mused. "Ah, I can picture him now: a giant of a man taller than Kellam, with arms as thick as my head. In his hand, he swings an axe that would take four average men to lift, and his chest, a forest of thick hair..."

"Am I now?" a voice, very much *feminine*, laughed from behind the group. "I don't know about the chest hair, and I'm honestly more of a swordswoman than an axe-wielder. But please, do go on." Drake and Chrom both turned to face the direction that Raimi had left in, and Drake grew deathly pale while Lissa and Chrom tried their hardest to stifle their laughter at his reaction, although Chrom was having more success.

Leaning against the throne in a sassy manner was a woman of about thirty-five years. She was almost as tall as Drake, and she struck an imposing figure in her masterfully crafted red and silver armor. Her skin was a light tan, her eyes were a piercing silver color, and her long, blonde hair was tied back in a messy ponytail. Chrom noted the Silver Sword that was sheathed at her hip, making a note to restock on weapons at the next possible convenience. The woman walked up towards the quartet, Raimi following behind her, and Chrom noted that, despite her apparent age, she carried herself with the spring in her step of a much younger woman.

"Oh, do calm yourself, boy," she laughed as the Tactician tried to make himself appear as small as possible beneath his cloak. "I'm not offended; rather, I'm impressed by all the flattery." She laughed again, and Drake slowly emerged from hiding, chuckling at his own foolishness.

"You're the Khan, I'm assuming?" Frederick asked matter-of-factly, in no way affected by the humor going on before him.

"One of them, yes," the woman responded, turning and eyeing the Great Knight with slight disinterest. She then turned to Chrom, and gripped his wrist in a warrior's embrace—a gesture he quickly returned. "My name is Flavia, the Khan of East Ferox. I heard about the debacle at the Longfort, and I apologize for my subordinate's actions." She said the last part of that sentence while glaring at Raimi, who was now trying to hide *herself* in her armor, before turning back to the Prince. "You and your Shepherds are always welcome in Regna Ferox."

Chrom nodded, before a thought struck him. "Raimi said that you've had problems with bandits posing as myself for the past month." Flavia nodded grimly.

"Yeah, those *Plegian* scumbags," she spat out, distaste written clearly on her face. "To be honest, I wasn't entirely certain until I personally took to the field and heard the accent myself. No Ylissian speaks the way those Plegian dogs do, no matter how good of an actor one thinks they are. Their king probably sees some benefit in setting our nations against each other." Chrom's grip on Falchion tightened as his anger grew.

"Damn them!" he growled in irritation. Realizing a moment too late what he said, he bowed to Flavia apologetically. "I... Forgive me, Khan Flavia. That was indelicately put." The Khan, however, laughed heartily, taking no offense at Chrom's outburst.

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "Damn them—and damn delicacy as well! Here in Regna Ferox, we prefer plain speech, Prince Chrom."

"Well then," Chrom stated as he stood up from his bow, "You should probably have a word with your *damn* border guards!" Flavia laughed even louder than she had before, pulling the Prince into a friendly headlock.

"Yes, I can tell that I like you already! You understand Feroxi diplomacy!" Before the two rulers could continue the child-like display, Frederick and Raimi, both irritably annoyed with their charges, cleared their throats simultaneously. A moment of silent passed, before Flavia released the Prince and coughed lightly.

"Ah, forgive me, Prince Chrom. I know why you're here." The Khan sighed before continuing. "Unfortunately, I can't provide you with the reinforcements that you've come seeking." Drake honestly expected Chrom to do something that would cause him to lose face in front of the Khan after hearing that. What he didn't expect was Frederick to beat his charge to the punch.

"And why not?" the Great Knight growled menacingly. Flavia shook her head sadly.

"I lack the authority," she spoke in a nonchalant voice. Frederick reached for his lance, but was stopped as Lissa whacked his head with her staff.

Now Chrom was growing confused. "I don't understand," he said, making it a point to ignore the events going on behind

him. "I thought you said that you were the Khan?"

"Like I said," the Khan casually explained, "I'm *one* of the Khans. Regna Ferox has two major Khans: one who leads East Ferox, and one who rules over West Ferox. One of us acts as the Khan-Reagent, getting command of the armies of the lesser Khans and clan leaders, with the throne switching between us every so often. Currently, it's the West-Khan who's in power, and he'd be the one who would have the final say in whether you get your troops or not." Chrom's hopes started to deflate, as it looked like they would be alone in an impending war with Plegia.

"So we're to receive no help at all?" At this point, Frederick was at the breaking point, and looked about ready to throttle the East-Khan.

"Not necessarily, Chrom." All eyes in the room turned to Drake, who stood with a confident grin on his face, and both arms crossed over his chest. "She said that power changes hands every so often. The way that happens is through a tournament that's held every few years or so. Both Khans send forth a predetermined number of champions into the arena to represent them, since the Khans don't necessarily participate themselves. The tournament is fought in a 'last man standing' sort of style; however, to minimize casualties, the aim isn't to kill your opponents. Rather, you have to disarm your adversaries and force them to concede. Whichever team wins has their represented Khan get the top job." He opened his eyes, and noticed everyone staring at him with questioning looks-or in Frederick's case, a distrusting glare.

"What?" he said with a confused frown. "I read up on Feroxi traditions before we left." He then smiled sheepishly. "Granted, it was in the middle of the night, and I don't remember most of what I read, but I memorized that one segment like the back of my hand. I figured it would come in handy." He was met with silence, before a booming laugh escaped Flavia's lips.

"Ha! Your Tactician's smarter than Raimi said he was, Prince Chrom!" she exclaimed, nudging him with her armored elbow. "Yes, we do hold a tournament every few years. And, as luck would have it, the tournament takes place this afternoon. Now all I need are two champions who'd be willing to represent me." She turned around, and started to walk away slowly, before stopping at the throne.

"But where am I going to find two willing people who are strong enough, swift enough, and smart enough to fight for me?" Her tone of voice suggested that she already knew the answer, and was deciding to play hard to get. Drake and Chrom looked at each other, and nodded, before addressing the East-Khan.

"We'll do it," they said in unison.

The time for the tournament was at hand. Drake and Chrom stood at the edge of the dirt arena that was the location for many of Regna Ferox's political 'debates'. The two Shepherds looked around at the stands; already the stands were packed, and the crowd's roar was deafening. Drake spotted Lissa's unmistakable pigtails up near the front of the crowd, and was pleased to know that all the other Shepherds-even Kellam-were unharmed, although Vaike looked to be a little sick to his stomach. Given the goofy grin he saw plastered onto Stahl's face, it was obvious that Vaike had bitten off more than he could chew by challenging the green-armored Cavalier to an eating contest.

"Drake, are you ready for this?" the Prince asked, taking Drake's attention back to the upcoming fight. The Tactician nodded in response. "Remember, we're fighting for our alliance here; if we win, Ylisse gets the troops that she needs. But if we lose..." Chrom shook his head; he didn't want to think about what should happen if they failed.

"We won't lose, Chrom," Drake said confidently. "You and I are two of Ylisse's best warriors. It'd take more than just two Feroxi to take us down." He then smiled jokingly. "But, if by some ungodly chance we do get our arses handed to us on a silver platter, we can always just suck up to the West-Khan, and petition him for an alliance." Chrom punched the Tactician lightly in the shoulder.

"Royals don't 'suck up' to others, moron," the Prince said in mock anger, before laughing. Drake quickly followed suit, before the two calmed down and set their focus on the other side of the arena.

Two figures emerged from the other end of the arena. The first was a male Myrmidon of twenty-four years, with messy, brown hair, and black eyes that looked to have seen terrible things at a young age. He wore a navy blue coat that was lined with light tan furs around the collar and sleeves. At his hip hung a curved, katana-esque blade that was familiar to Drake; he had seen a sword of the exact same make in the Shepherd's barracks before they left, but the blade's name remained a mystery to him.

The Tactician was so focused on the Myrmidon, that he almost jumped a foot into the air when Chrom nudged him. "Drake, look," the Prince whispered softly, gesturing towards their second opponent. Drake looked, and silently gasped.

Their other opponent...was Marth.

"I see him..." Drake said, gripping the handle of his Steel Sword tightly. Before either of the Shepherds could address their opponents, they heard the loud bang of a gong, and, knowing that the battle had begun, drew their swords.

And just in time, too, as the Myrmidon wasted no time in dashing towards the Prince and the Tactician, quickly unsheathing his blade and slashing at them in the same moment. Chrom rolled quickly to the left, while Drake brought his blade up at an angle to block the attack. As the two weapons connected, Drake felt the blow vibrate through his arms, and almost dropped his sword right then and there; it was only through sheer willpower that he held onto the weapon. Not even being given a rest, the Tactician was forced to backpedal quickly as the Myrmidon preformed three quick slashes, trying to knock Drake or the sword he carried to the ground.

Chrom got up from his roll, and turned to help Drake, before noticing that Marth hadn't taken his blade from its sheath, and was staring at the Prince intently. "So," he asked the mysterious traveller, "You're to be my opponent?" Marth nodded curtly.

"I am," he said. Chrom nodded.

"Very well; I would like to speak first before we begin, Marth. However, something tells me that you're not the talkative type." The masked man nodded, agreeing with Chrom's deduction. "You saved Drake's life when we first met, so I'll attempt to show you mercy." Chrom grabbed Falchion's hilt, and drew it with an over-the-shoulder flourish. Marth drew his blade in the exact same fashion as Chrom only a second later. As he finished, Chrom caught his first good glance at the blade, and gasped.

"Where...Where did you get that sword?" he asked in shock. He couldn't believe his eyes, but he wasn't dreaming.

As impossible as it was, Marth was wielding an exact copy of the Falchion.

"There's no way..." Both swordsmen dashed at each other, and their blades connected in a deadlock. Chrom broke the stalemate and side-slashed at Marth, hoping to catch him off guard. Much to his shock, and chagrin, however, the masked man parried the strike almost perfectly, before thrusting the faux Falchion at the Prince. He only barely avoided the blow by sidestepping away, but was not prepared as Marth slammed his armored shoulder into Chrom's chest, although the former hissed slightly in pain.

"Tell me," Chrom grunted as he recovered from the cheap shot. "Who taught you to fight like this?" Almost immediately afterwards, Chrom leapt into the air, and dived at Marth in a vertical spin, forcing the younger man to dodge backwards in a flip. As Chrom hit the ground, he looked up, and saw the masked man preforming the *exact same move* on him.

"My FATHER!" Marth cried out as he came down faster than Chrom would've been able to dodge. He could only turn so his shoulder guard took the brunt of the blow, and as the blade hit the metal, he could feel a bone or two in his upper arm fracture. It hurt like hell, but he had to power through the pain, for Yisse.

Drake was having a little better luck against the Myrmidon, but not by much. His speed was incredible, and he never let the Tactician have more than a moment's rest, constantly keeping him on his feet. Plus, the number of times Drake had to block the Myrmidon's swings left his arms increasingly fatigued. *He's relentless*, the Tactician thought to himself. *Sooner or later, I'm the one who's going to slip up and make a mistake. Perhaps we underestimated our opponents...Or overestimated our own skills...*

"You're the one who beat Raimi, correct?" the Myrmidon spoke for the first time in the duel, and the fact that he was conversing with the Tactician left him stunned.

"Yes, why do you ask?" he replied cautiously, not sure if the gruff-voiced man was trying to lower his guard or not. The Myrmidon grunted.

"Your skills aren't showing it. When I heard her talk about how easily you bested her, I figured you would be a worthy opponent." He shook his head sadly, before gripping his blade tighter. "It seems my faith was misplaced." With one step, he thrust the katana towards Drake, who tried to dodge, and escaped mostly unharmed. However, he heard the sound of fabric ripping, and looked down to see his precious cloak, one of his only possessions, get torn.

His gaze rose back up to the Myrmidon's, and now the gruff-voiced man was scared. Where the Tactician's eyes had been violet before, now they glowed blood-red for a second, before returning to their normal color. Drake growled menacingly, he was through playing games.

"No one...Ruins my cloak...And gets away with it!" With a growl, he dashed at the Myrmidon, all fatigue forgotten, and unleashed a flurry of blows that his opponent now had trouble keeping up with. He forced the Myrmidon back, until an upward slash sent the katana flying out of the Myrmidon's hands, and into the wall behind them. With one final flick of the wrist, Drake's blade was planted on the Myrmidon's chest, and both were panting from exertion.

"...Perhaps I was mistaken," the Myrmidon said finally. "Your skill is equal to that of what Raimi said, if not more so." The corner of his mouth lifted slightly, before he turned and walked to the arena's sidelines. "By the way, my name's Lon'Qu."

Drake heard a small, barely audible scream coming from the stands, and turned towards the source, surprised to see that it was Lissa. She was tearing up, and slowly pointed behind the Tactician when she saw him glancing up at her. He turned, and a small gasp escaped from his lips.

The Falchion had been knocked from Chrom's hands, and Marth stood before him, his blade-which looked very similar to Chrom's sword, he noted-at the Prince's throat. Silence coursed through the arena for what felt like hours, before Chrom slowly raised his hands in surrender, although not without some pained hissing, backed away from the masked man's blade, picking up his own, and retreating from the battle. Marth stared after the Prince for a few moments, as if making sure he was actually retreating, before turning to the Tactician.

"...Just you and me now," he said, aiming his faux Falchion at the Tactician. Drake quickly glanced at the masked man, and then raised his blade in anticipation for the fight ahead.

Marth wasted no time, and as soon as he saw the other man's blade rise, he dashed towards him, hoping to end the battle quickly. To his surprise, however, the Tactician directed the faux Falchion away; it wasn't a perfect parry, but it still caught the masked man off guard, since he believed that all of Drake's energy had been used just to survive Lon'Qu's onslaught.

From there, the battle continued, with neither side gaining an advantage, although Drake had little opportunity to do anything but defend. Marth's breathing grew heavier and heavier, as he kept striking hard and fast. Although he knew he could win, Marth couldn't help but feel as if he was being played. It was almost like the Tactician was scoping him out, and drawing him in for the kill. Marth thrust forward, and Drake dodged to the side, a glint of victory in his eyes. The masked man caught the glint, and finally realized that he'd been had.

"Damn..." was all that he could say, before the Tactician sprung his trap.

Drake swept his left leg out, and tripped up the blue-masked swordsman, before thrusting his sword through the hole in the faux Falchion's hilt. With a flick of his wrist, Drake flung the blade from Marth's hand, and into the ground behind him, only feet away. Marth slammed into the ground hard, and mere seconds later, the cold tip of Drake's blade was planted firmly against his stomach.

The entire attack had lasted only a few seconds, but, with the silence that reigned through the arena, it felt like an eternity. Finally, Marth spoke.

"Impressive...if not surprising," the masked man said. "I yield, sir." Drake nodded his head, and removed the blade from the man's stomach. Marth stood, and backed away from the Tactician, collecting the faux Falchion as he left the arena.

Drake sheathed his sword, and turned towards Chrom, who was walking over to the Tactician. "We did it," he told the Prince when he was close enough. However, Chrom shook his head.

"No, you did it," he replied. "You were the one who took out both the Myrmidon and Marth." He grabbed his upper left arm, where the fractured bones were. "All I did was get my royal arse handed to me on a silver platter." Drake placed a gloved hand on Chrom's other shoulder.

"First, you might want to get that arm looked at. And second..." He took Chrom's right hand in his, and raised them into the air, at which the silence of the arena erupted into a monumental uproar. Thousands of voices cheered for the victors, and a smile came to Drake's face. "Had you not weakened Marth, I wouldn't have been able to take advantage of him and win. So, in fact, *we* did it." Chrom smiled softly, before laughing.

"Heh, you're right!" The two Ylissian warriors lowered their outstretched arms, and Drake fell back onto the ground. "You okay, Drake?" The Tactician didn't respond for a few moments, but finally answered Chrom's inquiry.

"You got any water on you?"

After satiating his thirst and getting Chrom's arm healed, Drake and Chrom were escorted back to the throne room,

where Lissa, Frederick, Raimi, and Flavia were already waiting. As soon as she saw them, Lissa ran up to her brother and tackled him in a huge hug, practically crying tears of joy upon seeing he was okay. Frederick shook his head in exasperation, although Drake thought he saw a ghost of a smile form on the Great Knight's lips for a moment. Flavia just laughed, and approached the Tactician.

"That was a spectacular display, Tactician," she said. "You've earned my respect, and more to the point, your alliance. Ylisse will have her troops, and I'll lead them personally." Chrom finally managed to get his sister off of him, and approached Flavia, shaking her hand.

"Thank you, Khan Flavia," the Prince said.

"Hah! I should be thanking you and your Tactician, Chrom. It's felt like forever since I last held full power over Regna Ferox!" She released Chrom's hand, and started walking out of the throne room. "Come, friends! Tonight, we celebrate Feroxi style!" And before anyone could ask what 'Feroxi style celebrations' entailed, she was gone, Raimi chasing after her like a nanny chasing her granddaughter.

A loud grunt came from behind the four Shepherds, and they turned towards the throne. Leaning against it was the living embodiment of Drake's original description of the Khan: tall-though only half a head shorter than Kellam (putting him at eye level with Frederick), his arms brimming with muscles and masculinity. He wore gold armor that left his entire torso vulnerable to weapons and the cold, and along the neck was a mass of white fur. He wore an eyepatch over his left eye, and his visible one was of a similar color to his skin.

"Bah!" the Feroxi man grumbled. "Any excuse to get drunk, and that woman jumps on it. Then again, I'm no different..."

"I'm sorry, have we met?" Chrom asked the giant. He turned towards the Prince, and approached him.

"No, but I'm the West Khan," he said darkly. "You know, the one you *just deposed!*" He sighed. "And just when I got my chambers the way I wanted them..." The dark look on the giant's face faded quickly, however, and he laughed heartily, offering his hand to the Prince.

"But I'm quick to forgive and forget! You and your Tactician are quite skilled for ones so young." Chrom took the man's hand, and shook it firmly. "The name's Basilio, and it's an honor to meet you, Prince Chrom." The Prince laughed: he liked the West-Khan. He was similar to Flavia, yet very different; both were loud, and obviously charismatic, but Basilio seemed...wiser, almost as if he had seen some things early in life no person should ever see.

"And at least this means those annoying advisers will stop following me around for a few years," the West-Khan continued. "At least until I get my throne back, that is."

"Khan Basilio," Frederick interrupted, "May I ask why you're associating yourself with milord, the man who, in your words, deposed you?" The former Khan stared at the Great Knight like he had just grown a second head, and then laughed.

"Like I said, I'm quick to forgive and forget. And besides, we were only enemies for the duration of the tournament. Now that it's over, everything's back to normal." Then, he turned to the Tactician. "Also, your Tactician wanted to know more about that Marth kid, or so an attendant told me." Drake nodded.

"That's right, Khan Basilio. Any information you give us is appreciated." The West-Khan laughed.

"Please, just call me Basilio. Everyone does, even when I was Khan!" Afterwards, he shook his head. "Sadly, I don't have that much on him. All I know is that he's some sellsword with delusions of grandeur. He just showed up one day and kicked my other champion's arse to kingdom come and back, so I asked him if he wanted the job." Basilio then laughed heartily. "It was love at first sight, and I'm too old for such things, I'd say!"

He shook his head afterwards. "Anyways, the kid's gone. Up and left as soon as the tournament ended."

Drake and Chrom nodded, while Lissa sighed absentmindedly.

"He's so dark and mysterious..." she said, her face all starry-eyed. Drake gripped his blade's hilt tightly, growing increasingly frustrated at the thought that another man was winning Lissa's heart.

Wait, what the hell am I thinking?! Drake thought, the mental image of Lissa in a wedding dress popping into his mind again. *Why am I thinking this?! She's a princess, and a teenager at that; let her swoon over whoever she wants! Besides, you're an amnesiac nobody; she's too good for you!* He shook the image out of his head.

"Heh, seems like the sellsword's got a fangirl!" Basilio said jokingly, earning himself a glare from Frederick. Lissa blushed profusely.

"Hey!" she stammered. "I-I'm just saying, he's kind of dreamy, right?" Chrom shook his head.

"And you're kind of *dreaming*, Lissa!" he sighed, rolling his eyes and earning another booming laugh from Basilio as Lissa held her hands up in mock surrender.

"Geez, well *excuse me*, big brother for being *human*!"

"Am I the only one who thinks that Marth was way too effeminate?" Drake said to himself, although Chrom apparently caught it, and shook his head.

Frederick coughed, clearing his throat and grabbing the Prince's attention. "Well," he said tonelessly, "This conversation has been...interesting, to say the least. But I fear we must be leaving for Ylisse immediately. The Exalt must be informed of the reinforcements with all due haste." He turned to leave, but Basilio stopped him.

"That wouldn't be a good idea," he said gravely as he moved back to lean against the throne. "My scouts reported this morning that the area surrounding the Coliseum will be trapped in a powerful blizzard for the next two days. Leaving now would mean getting caught in that storm." He laughed loudly after that. "Besides, you'd also miss the feast that Flavia's no doubt set about planning!"

"Exactly!" Lissa quickly agreed with the West-Khan. "Besides, you already took one feast away from me. And as your princess, I order you not to deprive me of another one!" Drake had to admit, it was both funny and cute, seeing Lissa glare up at Frederick, when she only came up to about his chest.

"I'm sorry, milady. But we must make all haste." Suddenly, Flavia appeared behind Frederick, and pulled him into a friendly headlock; no small feat, considering she was a head shorter than him.

"Ah, don't worry about it," she told the Great Knight. "I took the liberty of sending a messenger bird to Ylisse, informing the Exalt of our alliance." She laughed, her voice lively and carefree. "By the time you get your Shepherds organized and ready to move, she'll have been to Ylisse and back twice!" Chrom sighed.

"Well," he said, "We *could* use the break..." Frederick glanced at his liege, then sighed in defeat.

"Very well. We can stay for the celebration." Lissa cheered animatedly, and hugged Frederick.

"YES!" she exclaimed. "Thankyouthankyouthankyou!" The others laughed at Lissa's antics, each one glad to know that they had an ally in the event of war.

That night, the party was in full swing. Despite the raging blizzard outside (or maybe because of it), the Coliseum and the town that surrounded it were packed. It almost felt like all of Regna Ferox had shown up just for the celebration. Drake glanced down at the city from the balcony he was on, and breathed in the cool night air. Quickly, he glanced back into Khan Basilio's chambers.

When he first saw them, he couldn't believe how massive it was; at best, he estimated it to be about the same size as the Shepherds' Barracks, except at least twice as tall, and not counting the stables. Looking back now, the size still impressed him. Flavia and Basilio had been kind enough to escort the Shepherds here for the celebration, where Basilio promptly challenged Vaike, Flavia, Sully, and Chrom to a drinking match. They were already three drinks in, and Vaike was out, with Sully and Chrom looking a little tipsy. Sumia and Virion were off playing something that looked similar to chess, while Lissa and Frederick kept a close eye on the drinking match, specifically watching Chrom. Mirel and Stahl sat away from the group, talking with each other, though Drake couldn't hear the conversation, and Kellam was nowhere to be seen.

Another hectic day, the Tactician thought to himself. *We competed in a tournament, got involved with another country's politics, and nearly got beaten in said tournament.* He sighed. *Maybe we should be training harder...The bandits and Risen will only be growing stronger by the day...*

"Copper for your thoughts, Drake?" Sumia's voice startled the Tactician out of his reverie, and he turned to the brunette Pegasus Knight.

"Oh, hey Sumia. I'm just..." Drake sighed before continuing. "I'm just thinking about...things." He wasn't sure what to say after that.

"You're worried about how tough the battle today was, and whether we're all strong enough to handle the increasing difficulty." He looked at the brunette as if she had just told him that he would marry royalty someday. She had guessed his thought process exactly!

"Yeah...How did-?"

She shrugged. "Just a lucky guess, I suppose." Sumia placed a hand on his shoulder. "Don't worry; as long as we have you leading us, I think we'll be alright." Drake smiled at Sumia.

"Thanks, Sumia." She nodded, and the two of them stepped back into the warmth of the Khan's chambers.

Back at the Longfort, no guards stood at watch; most of them had either retired for the night, or gone to watch the tournament, and stayed for the celebration. This allowed Marth to scale the walls of the border fort unopposed, before stopping and looking back in the direction of the Coliseum.

"Just a little longer," he muttered to himself. "A little longer, and tragedy can be averted." He shook his head, before jumping to the ground, and rushing back into the snowy forest.

Everyone say it with me: ServantofGrima! Has! No! Time! Management! Skills!

I gave myself (and a reviewer) an approximate date on which the next chapter will be released. So what happens? I release it an entire MONTH after the date! The only good news is that it wasn't an EIGHT MONTH WAIT! ...College is really sucking my time away...

But hey, I feel like this is my best chapter yet! The whole month of working on it was spent getting the chapter as close to perfection as I could, so there wasn't any time wasted there.

Anyways, next chapter will HOPEFULLY not take as long, so until then, this is ServantofGrima, signing out!

Frederick: "It would please both me and milord if you would rate, review, favorite, and follow this tale."